

THE PUN

YOUR INDEPENDENT GUIDE TO THE MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL COMEDY FESTIVAL

2007



Tragedy, they say, is inherently funny. It's why some of us (Let's face it, most of us.) try desperately, often unsuccessfully, to stifle our guilty chortles at others' misfortune. Comedic films such as *The Royal Tenenbaums* and *The Squid and the Whale* exemplify this exegesis of humour and calamity; although, it arguably gives little explanation for the popularity of 'Australia's Funniest Home Videos'.

This analysis of comedy would assert that depressing and confronting fodder such as heartbreak, rejection, family dysfunction and addiction would make a highly successful comedy routine; logically, one would declare Greg Fleet to be one of Australia's most successful (if not slightly tragic) comedians.

Fleet is a festival veteran, having braved and entertained

the comedy connoisseurs both at Melbourne International Comedy Festival and Edinburgh Fringe. He's done a stint on the Austereo radio network (the subject of Judith Lucy's scathing invective at last year's festival) and enjoyed widespread public recognition for his role on 'Neighbours'. What drove Fleet to give soap-opera job security the flick in favour of the fickle mistress of stand-up comedy is anyone's guess, but soon enough, he was getting paid regularly to make people laugh.

His comedy festival experiences have been overwhelmingly upbeat. In particular, he enjoys the 'cool and creative vibe' that Edinburgh Fringe and MICF exude. The crowds behave well, as if they were 'watching theatre,' Fleet marvels, and he suggests that even the hecklers at the festivals serve a productive purpose.

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'It's usually creative and constructive, rather than pissed or angry,' he says—although, one year, a severely inebriated woman interrupted his show by walking to the middle of the stage, holding up her shoe and loudly lamenting that it was broken. She looked at him expectedly, to see if he could fix it. 'She thought I was a cobbler,' laughs Fleet.

Festival drunkards aside, he can count some of the world's most renowned comedic talent as fans; he attributes his success to Eddie Izzard and Frank Skinner attending his shows early in his career and, fortunately, spreading the word.

It's not only his comedy routine that has made him so fascinating to the media; Fleet also endured a well-publicised addiction to heroin (He left rehab in January this year.) and a family dynamic

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ADAM HILLS • DYLAN MORAN • DANIEL KITSON • GREG FLEET • FIONA O'LOUGHLIN
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Welcome

The *Pun* is a free, independent magazine, offering an alternative viewpoint on the Melbourne international comedy festival. But who is behind such a production, I hear you ask? We're good kids. This mag was created and is run by 20-somethings. More than half of our editorial team are 21-years-olds. We're not on ice, and we offer our seats to the elderly on public transport. We spend most of our time studying, working, and volunteering for community projects.

We dedicate months to this mag because we think the arts are important. We think Melbourne International Comedy Festival is important. We think local and smaller acts are important. We think indie publishing is important. We think youth media is important.

If any publication deserves the festival's support and advertising dollars, *The Pun* does. Seriously, the mag's awesome and we're awesome.

I can honestly and unashamedly say that of all the youth-orientated groups I've come across, *The Pun* publishers A New Leaf Media are doing the most exciting, most accessible, most inclusive, most read stuff. We don't receive masses of advertising dollars or government funding. This magazine is intended to create opportunities for young writers, journalists, reviewers and comedians alike. If you're reading this magazine, then we have succeeded. It's all about allowing a different voice to be heard, a new face to be discovered and, above all, respect to be given to a new generation.

We produce the mags out of nothing but talent, determination, and good will. I'm humbled and inspired by the staggering amount of affection, support and contributions *The Pun* gets from readers, writers, editors, mentors, friends and organisations:

Express Media, you're so legit. Real recognise real. Thanks for seeing worth in what we do and finding us shelter.

Is Not Magazine, underneath your trendy pinafores beats a heart of gold. You're the coolest kid in school; we're a heavy-set Juggalo. Thanks for sitting next to us on the bus.

Ross House, your home is where our heart is. We promise not to take for granted the opportunity.

Slingshot, *The Pundit* wouldn't have happened without you. We haven't forgotten what you did for us.

Crumpler, thanks for your generous and genuine support—monetary and otherwise.

Farrago, editors past and present, you've always been there when things have headed south. I'm still waiting for you to judge us. You're so forgiving. I may weep all over your thoughtfully put together outfits.

Richard Watts, when we grow up, we want to be you.

Janette Sato, shorty, you're my angel. I wish I were half the friend, editor, writer, and person that you are.

Susanna Bryceson and Greg Burchall, thanks for having faith that your guidance wouldn't be wasted on me.

Martin Hughes, please feel free to give Lefa an ear bashing whenever you get a chance. Somebody's got to keep that girl in line.

Gillian, you and I are truly the sane meat in the youth media sandwich. I can't believe we're practically publishing veterans.

Kelly, you're an incredible leader. I'd follow you blind into heavy traffic.

Terrible Tim, god bless you. Thanks for holding me to the highest possible standard.

Lefa, career-maker, heart-breaker, you're too important to stop now. Publishing needs you. I need you.

Lastly, I'm thankful that I wasn't forced to write a trite editorial on festival politics [*Editor: Seriously, though, why are strippers considered comedy?*]. 🍷

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A New Leaf Media wish to acknowledge that we are on indigenous ground - this land is the spiritual and sacred place of the Wurrundjeri, Bunurong, Woiwurrung and Wathurong ancestors and continues to be a place of significance for all people of the Kullin nations. Further, we thank them for sharing this land with us and agree to respect their laws and lores.

Run!

She's headed right for us

I hate the comedy festival. I hate it. I dread it. I fear it. I like performing, and I like spending a month with my friends from all over Australia and world.

I hate the build up, the writing, the stressing, the doubting. You test it and trial it, but it's always funny one night, awful the next.

One good thing has come out of the build up to this particular comedy festival is that I have come to realise just how good I am at procrastination.

In fact, I just re-wrote the previous sentence a dozen times... just to procrastinate.

But it gets even worse.

For example, I live in the general Fitzroy area, but please, don't let that give you the wrong idea, despite that, I still wash regularly.

And I live a block from a supermarket, possibly the most expensive supermarket in Melbourne.

Those who live in the area will know which supermarket I'm talking about, and to the owners of said supermarket: I hope you are enjoying your fleet of gold plated helicopters because everybody hates you.

Last week, I even got a call from the Pope who said you were, and I quote, 'massive pricks'.

So as I was saying, this festival, I have taken procrastination to such a level that I went to said supermarket run by said pricks, not to buy anything, just to see if there was anybody there I could talk to.

I ran into three friends.

I helped them shop for an hour.

It's like a sickness.

I'm actually getting so good at procrastination, I'm thinking of entering the World Procrastination Championships in Zurich this June.

Well, I was, I just never got around to filling out my application form.

Having said that, there might be a second chance because they say the championships might get pushed back because the organisers have gotten really behind schedule on the construction of the stadiums.

I hope you enjoy the festival. You're totally mental if you don't go and see Adam Hills. Saw his show at the Adelaide Fringe. I've never seen a comic get that kind of reaction. It was a love-in. More than a thousand people were floating two feet above the ground in a theatre make of jokes. Fuck, I'm poetic.

Michael Chamberlin Buddha & Bluey & Me is at Alley Bar until April 29. 🍷



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that was (apologies for the lack of eloquence) utterly fucked.
His father was, as Fleet recalls, a “sex addict...a rooting machine,” and the impetus behind his acclaimed stand-up gig *I Wish You Were D(e)ad*. Philandering aside, Fleet’s father faked his own suicide to ‘escape family life to the States’. It’s an astonishing incident that’s hard for outsiders to fathom. To this day, Fleet remains incredulous in his recounting of events.

‘It was genius. He was very theatrical as well,’ he remarks in his somewhat laconic yet indolent drawl. ‘He’s just mad; he’s done a lot of crazy things.’
Apparently, his father was in email contact shortly after the Edinburgh performance of *I Wish You Were D(e)ad*, and suggested that Fleet had ‘issues’.

Fleet laughs, once more in disbelief, “I mean, whaddaya fucking reckon?”
Perhaps, comedy has been a form of public therapy or a much needed catharsis; in any case, Fleet maintains that his relationship with his father is probably better than it’s ever been.

‘We don’t talk much,’ he admits. ‘But, when we do, it’s pretty good’.
Fleet believes comedy is linked with tragedy. He suggests that most comedians tend to focus on the topical, which seemingly happens to be dismal—’war, current affairs, drink driving’—it’s not the stuff that happiness is made of.

‘Comedy is tragedy plus time’, he explains, and cites examples of comedians being chastised for speaking ill of the newly dead.
‘People made jokes about Diana after the day she died, and that was too much for people. It was too soon. Six months down the track and people are laughing their arses off at the same joke’.

Fleet joins a litany of comedians who tackle typically disheartening and confronting issues, but he’s adamant that he tries ‘not to have a victim’ in his jokes.

‘I’ll make jokes about AIDS’, he says, ‘but I don’t do jokes about a poor individual who has AIDS’. Rather, he would choose to focus on ‘the way we deal with the problem and the fear that’s instilled within society’.

His latest venture with Gud musician Mick Moriarty, however, seems a little less melancholy. When I ask him about his latest offering Fleetwood Mick, his response is characteristically deadpan: ‘It’s about AIDS’.

The show is, in fact, a parody of news-style programs, an inspired and anarchic invention of the current affairs shindig as we know it.
‘We’d like to see the news presented with songs, beat poetry... with music running through it’.

Personally, I think newsreading done as a poetry slam, Allen Ginsberg-style would rate the impeccable trousers off the unstoppable juggernaut that is ‘National Nine News’. Perhaps, it is something for those commercial newshounds to consider. ♫

In other news...

This year’s festival has started off on a joyous note: we’re winning the War On Terror. David Hicks has confessed to providing material support for terrorism. The bleeding-heart pinkos no longer have a leg to stand on with their bleating about his unfair treatment. Some went so far as to call it un-Australian, which is patently untrue. The Americans did him the honour of giving him a kangaroo court. Besides, sending a possible criminal to an empty, violent island on the other side of the world and leaving him there indefinitely is about as Australian as you can get. If he’d fashioned himself a helmet out of a bin and tried to shoot his way out, he could’ve been a national icon.

John Howard says we mustn’t paint Hicks as a hero, and I think he’s right. Hicks’s lawyer, Major Michael Mori says Hicks was captured while running away from the frontline. We’ve found the face of terror and looked it straight in the eye—only to have it run off quickly into the distance. I’m not really alert or alarmed, I’m just amazed that our Great and Powerful Friend is so scared of a guy who seems to have less ticker than Kim Beazley (Obviously, also less tikka than Kim Beazley. The catering at Guantanamo Bay is atrocious). I think the Americans were just jealous because David Hicks has actually met Osama bin Laden and they haven’t.

The Americans have apprehended other notable terrorists in their fight against the global threat of terrorism. Four men in Virginia pleaded guilty to training for an attack on the US by participating in several afternoon sessions of paintball. Al-Qaeda is preparing the big guns for us, and the big guns contain several litres of Salmon Pink with a gloss finish. Next week, I anticipate someone will confess to planning the attacks on the World Trade Centre with model airplanes and a couple of sets of Jenga.

One of the Virginian men’s lawyers said he couldn’t deny that his client had attended the paintball, but he couldn’t say that his client was a big participant because he ‘kept falling asleep because it was boring’. So far, Coalition of the Willing: 1, Sleepy Terrorists Spattered In Paint Running Fast In The Opposite Direction: Nil.

As Lleyton Hewitt would say, come on!

We mustn’t get too cocky; we must remain vigilant against possible threats to our way of life. I hear that many of these terrorists are providing material support to a variety of comedy festival shows this year. So the war must go on. Perhaps after six years of advancements like these, we should celebrate with a name change. My vote is for ‘War On Terror Countering Unnecessary National Threats to Security’.

Courteney Hocking Un-Australian is at Trades Hall until April 29. ♫

Spruik Off!

Except at comedy festival

The Pun investigates that age-old tradition of the spruiker, haunting the steps of the Melbourne Town Hall throughout the festival.

I'm not a fan of hackneyed 'oxford dictionary defines' introductions to articles and speeches but, in this instance, I think it's necessary to confess my ignorance, hoping I'm not the only one out there who didn't know what spruiking was.

Lots of odd images and definitions came to mind: the garnisher of restaurant meals ('Hey, kitchen-hand! Spruik that plate for service.'), a speciality cleaner or redecorator of some sort (sounds like spruce), kid's shenanigans ('You've been out spruiking all day, haven't you?'). And it went on like that.

So, encarta.msn.com defines spruik as follows: 'Australia. To promote goods, services or a cause by addressing people in a public place (humorous).'

The definition can be applied to a healthy portion of the advertising industry, all of it if you tweak the meaning. Television is as public a place as any, in a private sort of way. Think Franco Cozzo and Ken Bruce: funny at first but capable of driving us all completely mad. Think shonky get-rich-quick moguls who generously help you part with your hard-earned savings through seminars and schemes. Are preachers and televangelists spruikers? Debatable, but that's a whole other article.

Subscribing charity workers fall under the spruiking tag too. On the street, they can turn a 'few seconds of your time' into half an hour, albeit for a good cause. Then there are microphone-wielding earbashers who spout bargains outside department stores. They sound like wedding MCs if you don't automatically block them out. Last in this basic overview of spruiks are the flyer-wavers. You see them everywhere: street corners, in front of buildings, at the airport, anywhere with steady foot traffic. Mood dictates reaction. Sometimes, we take a flyer out of interest or empathy; sometimes, we walk past with a 'no thanks' or without making eye contact. Sometimes, we glare, shake our heads; sometimes, we tell them where to go.

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Eventually, it became clear why I didn't know the term (besides the fact that my vocabulary needs work). I already had a name for spruikers cemented in my stubborn brain: annoying bastards. That's a bit harsh, my conscience chides, we all need to work, which is mostly true. And what about telemarketers?

Every year, Melbourne International Comedy Festival generates a new breed of flyer-waving spruikers into ephemeral existence. Whether outside the multitude festival venues or walking with the erratic flow of Melbourne's streets, festival-goer or not, you'll see and hear them peddling their promotional wares.

Orange festival flags wave north up Swanston Street. It's seven and dark already. The cloudless sky adds to the autumn chill, and Town Hall's second empire architecture is dressed up for the funny season.

Three disco balls hang from each side of the colonnade and spin freckled light over the flagstones below. Stage lights rest above the second floor balcony, ready to transform the hall. The lanterns, branching from the facade, shine their coloured light, and giant orange boards, painted with street directions and that arrow-tailed, curl-headed, gaping-mouthed, dog-person logo thingy, adorn the columns.

The city is its usual self, a million moving voices talking at once. Packed trams clunk over intersections, car horns blare their complaints, the little green walk-man ticks pedestrians across streets.

They seem to be the only ones standing still. They're not though. The city moves around them as they bounce on the balls of their freezing feet and offer flyers with an outstretched hand to the stream of people passing over the portico. They work in small clusters or alone, either side of the colonnade, in between its columns or on the steps in front of the doorman's post. Some smile; others talk above the city hum.

'Stand up comedy show?', 'Interested in stand up?', 'Show at Hotel Generic Name.'

Here, it feels different from the norm. It's as if the festival's comic spirit has been instilled in passers-by. There're plenty of smiles, even with refusals. People take flyers and actually read them with interest. Some stop to talk. Directions, information, freebies, whatever: the spruikers oblige the chance to chat with animated hand gestures and jovial gusto.

A zealous young man, long curly locks and MICEF lanyard, crosses Swanston Street to the Town Hall corner. He's an Arts student, chosen to shoot a documentary for comedian Michael Connell, and is tonight handing out free tickets to the show.

'It's been good to see how it all works behind the scenes,' he says.

He'll be spruiking most nights of the festival, armed with an honest face and a fistful of tickets.

'Sometimes, you get bad reactions. At first, it can get you down, but you get used to it. Mostly, people are friendly,' says Sydney comedian Justin D Lodge, who is handing out flyers by the colonnade for his show *Life, Death and Komodo Dragons*. He's been in the stand-up game for three years, and this is his first MICEF.

'Selling your own show can be seen as selling your soul. Most comedians do, unless they can afford to pay people to do it.'

The public react warmly to Lodge's sociable grin. He jokes with them, tells them about the show, and scribbles on a few flyers to get them in for free. You couldn't generate better pre-show word-of-mouth.

These aren't your average spruikers, and their wares go beyond mundane, hand-delivered junk-mail. Most are volunteers, comedians, directing you to entertainment, walking and talking festival guides with a penchant for conversation.

If you like a good laugh, and there aren't many who don't, then it'll be worth your while to stop for a few seconds (not charity subscriber seconds) and see how a spruiker can help you out. And anyway, at least they don't call while you're eating dinner. 🍴

Laugh please, there's a lady on stage

In another life in the late-80s and 90s, I was a stand-up comedienne. My childhood heroes were the Python team, The Goons, The Goodies and Billy Connolly. I had crushes on them all, except maybe Harry Secombe, probably because I wanted to be them.

It never occurred to me that gender might be an issue until I auditioned for my first university comedy revue at Adelaide Uni. The director and everyone else laughed their heads off during my monologue, which if I recall rightly, contained some material about carrots and bottoms (their writing, not mine!).

Imagine my surprise when I was told I wasn't going to be in the next show because the director thought I was too funny and, as they didn't write humorous roles for women, I would get bored. He's since gone on to be a well-known television comic. I'm not going to name him and, of course, I'm not bitter...much. The next year he wasn't directing the review, I wrote my own skits and joined the team.

The only female comic role model, when I growing up, was Phyllis Diller. With her 'I'm so ugly I can't get laid' routine, she was the ground breaking female comic. This humour wasn't my cup of tea, and for the first and only time in my life, I really wished I were a guy. I'd thought I could be the seventh member of the Python gang. In fact, that title really belonged to Carole Cleveland who, though very talented, was never acknowledged as a member of the team. She was the straight woman.

After I graduated from drama school in Melbourne, Australia's comedy capital, in the 80s, comedy was raging. The Last Laugh in Collingwood's Smith Street was peaking and during every Melbourne International Comedy Festival, the upstairs room known as Le Joke would become La Joke—women-only for two weeks.

It seemed necessary then to give us a break. At most gigs if a woman were included in the line-up, she'd be the only one. It could get a little lonely. It's not that the guys left you out, but it was definitely more of a 'rock and roll' scene.

It was during this early stint with comedy, when I enjoyed some reasonable success, that I heard the term 'women's humour'. Like it or not, that phrase had a sense of 'lesser than'. It generally referred to jokes about relationships, children, the menstrual cycle and so on.

The term 'men's humour' was never heard. Even if you were hysterically funny, you still hadn't proved yourself worthy unless you got away from these traditionally female topics. The thing is that relationships, children, the menstrual cycle and all that girly stuff is so much of who we are.

I'm pleased to report that, though still in the minority, the number of female comics has increase since the days of dear old Phyllis. There's no more La Joke at The Last Laugh, but I can still single out some of the women in this year's Festival. These performers represent a cross section of the new and the more experienced, the traditional and not so traditional. So laugh please, there's a lady on stage.

Kim Hope has been doing stand-up since the mid-90s (In fact, we crossed paths occasionally.). She has appeared on television and radio and works regularly with her colleague and friend Adam Smith. She's appearing at Portland Hotel in her one-woman show *Rollercoaster*.

When I asked her how she felt these days about gender and comedy, she observed that it's no surprise that it's been a male domain because who else but a guy would think, 'I'm going to get up in front of all these pissed guys at the pub and make them laugh.'

It's hard to argue with that! 'Plus,' Kim adds. 'Comedy always seems to have a rather masculine, almost gladiatorial feel to it. The audience is going to go thumbs up or thumbs down, and that's it.' I guess comics don't use the word 'dying' for nothing.

Kim says experience doesn't make performing easier.

'I still get really nervous. I still want laughs, lots of laughs!'

Kim isn't afraid to use her personal life as fodder, or indeed the lives of those around her. She freely admits that she harassed her sister for material about her bout with bowel cancer then felt so bad she did a show about what a terrible thing it was to harass her cancer-recovering sister.

She describes her current show as being about heartbreak,



love, obsession, tears, elation and depression—the upside to being down and the downside to being up.

According to the 'women's humour' criteria, this may be traditional territory. But I guarantee there'll be nothing ho-hum about Kim's performance. She's not afraid to put herself right out there, and her energy is formidable.

**I'M NOT SURE
IF I SHOULD
TELL HER
THAT OLDER
FEMALE COMICS
HAVE TOLD ME
THAT THEY
SUSPECT BEING
'SUPPORTIVE' IS
A NEW PC WAY
OF PICKING
UP YOUNGER
FEMALE COMICS**

Cath Jamison has to come in as the rarest breed, a female comic magician. Australia's leading female magician (Magician of the Year at the Professional Stage Magic Awards), she's toured internationally. Her new show *The Secret Life of a Woman* is at Trades Hall.

She's come along way from her street performing days when she juggled chickens. Rubber that is. After talking to her, I wouldn't put it past her to juggle live chickens. This is a woman who sounds like she'll try anything as a performer, including swallowing razor blades during her show, No, it's not a trick.

Cath is a fully-qualified gardener. Clearly, she's eschewed traditional women's roles her whole life. She does, however, squeeze in a bit of 'women's humour' in her sassy, sexy, dove-whispering show, by picking a guy from the audience and taking him on a date.

'I spend so much time travelling that I haven't got time for meeting men, so I have to do it on stage,' laughs Cath.

Where else is a hard-working woman to meet a guy other than at work? And she doesn't have a male assistant.

In fact, her assistants are an act themselves, know as Perfect Nonsense, two tap-dancing, leder hose-wearing German girls.

Not content with jaw dropping tricks, Cath likes to take her audience



on a roller coaster of emotions. The show is magic, comedy, theatre and a blind date all in one, so seriously expect the unexpected.

Cath is a performer who knows where she's taking her audience, and knows how to not let her audience know where that is until they're there.

Courtney Hocking is a relative new comer; at only 24, she's young but definitely not shy! Studying writing and Australian studies, she's well qualified to give her spin on the latest political, cultural beat-up in her show *Un-Australian* at Trades Hall.

Politics is less traditional territory for women, not just on the stage. Courtney feels it makes her more interesting to the public. She loved comedy growing up but isn't someone who woke up one day and thought 'I'm funny, I'm going to do stand-up.'

She did, however, go and see a gig so bad that it inspired her to get up and do better. Which is something I wished hecklers would do.

She won the Uni Campus Comedy Award in 2001 and has appeared at the Comedy Club and The Local. Courtney also does a weekly podcast with Lawrence Leung and Andrew McClelland, which can be heard at www.nonstopical.com.

Courtney not only found that females were more than welcome in uni revues, but she also feels that there's no sexism from fellow males.

'They are all very supportive,' she says.

I'm not sure if I should tell her that older female comics have told me that they suspect being 'supportive' is a new PC way of picking up younger female comics. Perhaps, us older gals are too cynical.



Maureen Sherlock, Lyn Shakespeare and Carole Yelland deserve an award for best title of musical ever for their show *Alzheimer's The Musical*.

Jokes about growing old may not sound like a riot but to those who are heading in that direction, they're positively therapeutic.

Maureen, Lyn and Carol are experienced performers in theatre and television, and have performed together in various incarnations, including *Tragic At Their Age* for the 2004 comedy festival.

I should be so lucky to be that tragic at their age. When I rang for an interview they were driving back to Melbourne from The Big Laugh Comedy Festival in Sydney and there was a lot of laughing going on in that car. I get a sense that asking them if they're a bit left of centre of Melbourne's comedy scene is a stupid question. They are, of course, but they couldn't care less—one of the benefits of ageing.

Maureen, who writes all their shows, also writes children's books. These women have no intention of slowing down. Dementia be damned. Their audience is mixed. It's not just people praying their Depends will get them through the laughs. And it really is a musical.

Fiona O'Loughlin saw her first comedy gig 17 years ago and was enamoured with it. She had a go at it herself soon after but 'didn't quite get it' and decided to stop. In 2001, she came back to the fold with her show *Fiona And Her Sister (And Some Weird Guy)*. It was a huge hit and netted her a Barry Award for best newcomer. Since then, she's performed at Edinburgh Festival, in Montreal and L.A., and become one of our

foremost female comics, appearing on 'Rove' and 'The Panel'.

Barely into her 40s, Fiona is a mother of five—quite an achievement. Fiona surprised me by casually mentioning that, on top of that, she and her husband used to foster children as well, not just one or two. Over the years, they've fostered 30! Her comedy career has meant letting go of that side of her life, and I would say no one deserves to enjoy some personal success more than this woman!

Fiona met and married her husband in Adelaide. Work took them to Alice Springs. She admits it took her a while to get used to it, and sometimes, she felt a bit trapped. Being at home with small children can be isolating enough, let alone living in a remote area. However, comedy and the constant travelling have made coming home to Alice Springs a joy.

The ironic thing is she is less known there than anywhere else. She swears everybody thinks she's deluded.

'There goes that poor woman who thinks she's on the telly,' she claims they say as she walks down the street. 'Alice Springs is my personal Betty Ford clinic.'

The high from performing can be hard to follow with a quiet spell in your hotel room and, let's face it, going out and sharing your ups and downs with fellow comics is part of the joy of it all. It might be competitive at times, but it also a community where everyone knows where you're coming from.

It's a sobering thought, after all this contemplation around my own experience, that, as Fiona noted, ultimately comedy is a scene where age, gender and race really are irrelevant. It's about being funny. 🐔



Crossing the border under the cover of darkness

It's a well-known fact that every year a billion people attend the Melbourne Intergalactic Comedy Festival. They come in their millions by plane, boat, gyrocopter and segue. Speaking of segues: the three boys from *Hooray for Everything* aren't one. Matt, Phil and Stevie D left Brisbane by car at six on Sunday morning. (Imagine how early that would have been had daylight saving still been on! Well...It would have still been six in the morning—Brisbane is already too far behind the times to put their clocks back any further.) With 24 hours of driving ahead of them, they raced against the clock to make it to Melbourne in time for their favourite TV show 'The Biggest-Dancing-Celebrity-Idol-Dog-School'.

Devastated by the news of its cancellation (It was replaced with reruns of the 1984 season of 'Big Brother'). Hooray' stopped over in Sydney for the night, planning to enjoy the city's beautiful nightscape. Unbeknownst to them, the Government, under pressure



from Sandra Sully, had reached a plea bargain with eco-terrorists: one night with the lights out for the head of Tim Flannery. So under the cover of darkness, Andrew Bolt took another life. For the first time ever, there was not much of Flannery left and Bolt was not in the right. Hooray' high-tailed it out of Sydney faster than real estate capital. Twelve hours later, they finally arrived in Melbourne to find they'd missed the flower show. Stricken with grief, they went to Trades Hall, their venue for the festival, only to be accosted under a bridge on Lygon Street by a restaurateur who wouldn't let them pass until they'd 'eaten these pizzas three'.

Escaping with their lives and a delicious calzone, they scraped themselves into their home for the month, share-housing with fellow Brisbane comedians Fiona McGary and Josh Thomas. 🍷

Hooray for Everything Accept the Taxi Drivers is at Trades Hall until April 29.

Dry wit, very dry wit

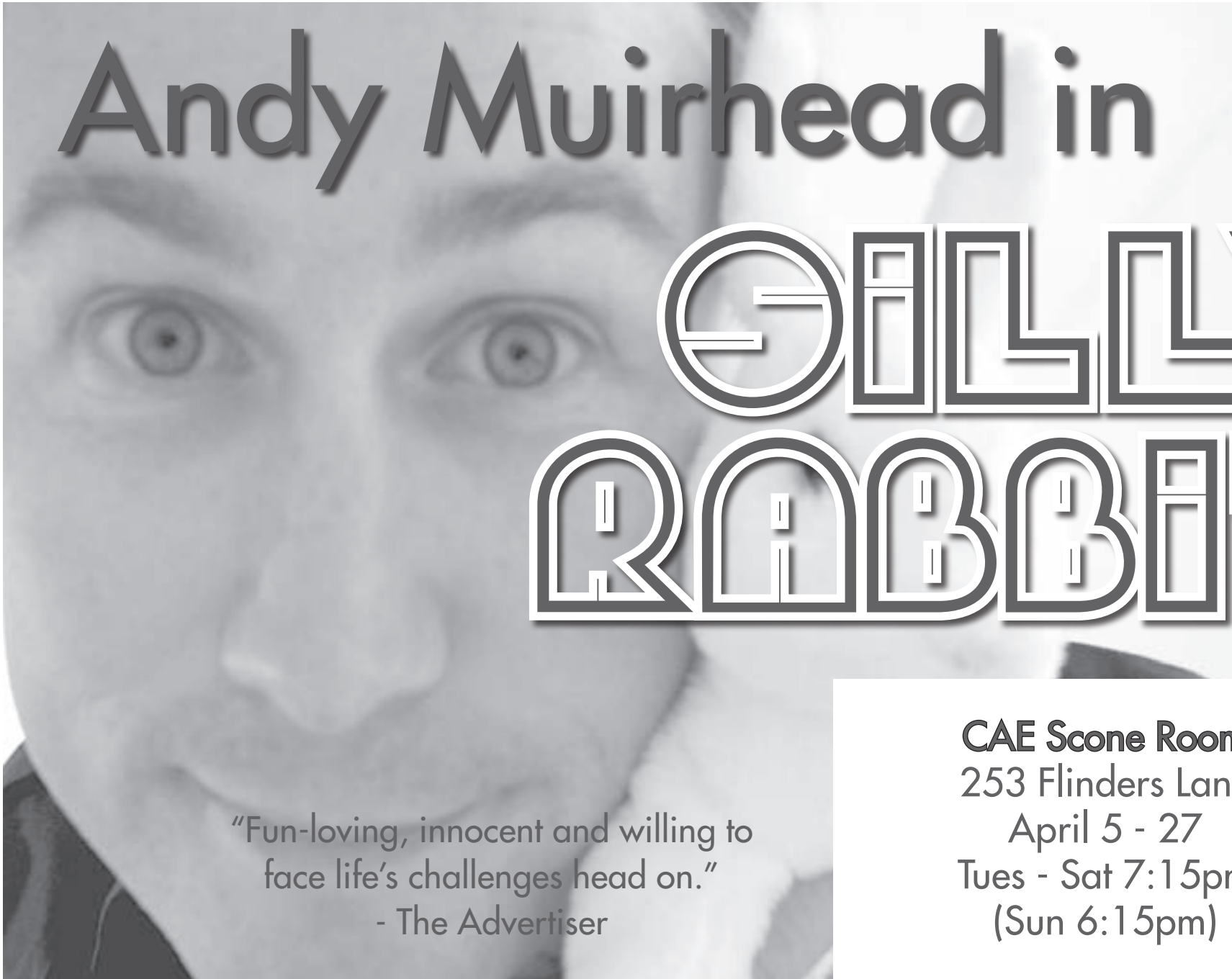
I love a drink. To tell the truth, I love lots of drinks. In good times and in bad, alcohol has always been there for me, a reliable friend, ready to commiserate or to celebrate. I probably wouldn't have lost my virginity without it—I had to get that bloke really drunk. Festivals are the perfect time for me, performing and staying out till the sun comes up, socializing, all with a little help from my friend. This year, however, I am going to survive the 26 glorious days of the Melbourne International Comedy Festival completely sober. Why? Well, as I mention in my show *Rollercoaster*, I had to abandon the joy juice for personal reasons. I drink too much, especially at festivals. I'm an all-or-nothing kinda gal, so this year, I've chosen...nothing.



MELBOURNE
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AND SUSAN
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ALLOW

It'll be a challenge. There are a lot of comedians who do not drink; I'm just not one of them. It's gonna hurt. It's gonna hurt bad. I'll probably catch myself looking longingly at the beautiful window displays at Dan Murphy's on Chapel Street (Oh, those happy, bubbly Yellowglens girls.). But I am determined to see it through. Gazing enviously at folks as they imbibe or going home early to cry, I will get through the month of April without the buffer of booze. Melbourne International Comedy Festival is wonderful. I adore it. Would marry it, if the law and Susan Provan would allow. So, I'm quite looking forward to giving it my full, undivided attention, to wake up remembering conversations and avoiding shame spirals. I'm wondering what it will be like to see the whole thing through without the foggy pain of hangover hell. What new friendships will grow in its absence and which long-standing ones will drop to the ground (not unlike me at the end of a big night)? I'm just going to head off to Chapel St to weep. No serious relationship ends without a few tears.

Kim Hope Rollercoaster is at Portland Hotel until April 29. 🍷



Andy Muirhead in

GILLY RABBIT

"Fun-loving, innocent and willing to
face life's challenges head on."
- The Advertiser

CAE Scone Room
253 Flinders Lane
April 5 - 27
Tues - Sat 7:15pm
(Sun 6:15pm)


Jimmy James Eaton's Sausage Sizzle

How can you be an Aussie bloke when you're allergic to football, your hero is David Bowie and you can't even work a BBQ?

Join Jimmy James (award-winning comedian and host of ABC TV's How the Quest Was Won) for a night of stand-up, short film, song, striptease and sausages.

Enter the surreal world of the Aussie sausage sizzle where your manhood is judged by your skill with the tongs and everything from nymphomaniac muppets to drum 'n' bass grannies is possible.

(2003 Raw Comedy finalist and 2006 WA Media Guild's People's Choice Award winner), Jimmy will make you laugh 'til you crave sausage.

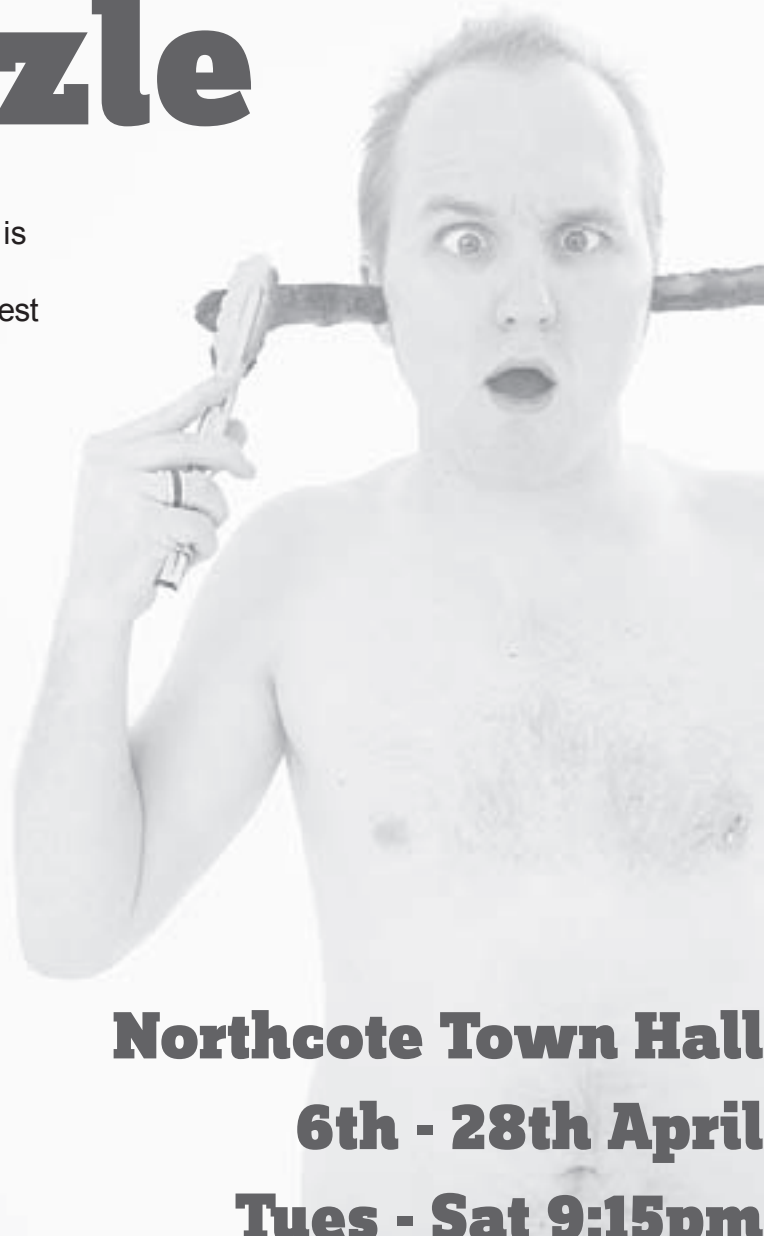


"Eaton's timing is
impeccable. He injects
humour and pathos
into his characters."

- The West Australian

"They didn't break
the mould following
the birth of John
Safran after all."

- The Age



Northcote Town Hall
6th - 28th April
Tues - Sat 9:15pm

LOVE THOSE LOCALS? SO DO WE!

We're keen to keep supporting our local and emerging talent, making sure that the hard toll of Melbourne International Comedy Festival is just that little bit easier next time round. This year we introduce our

CROWE ABOUT IT AWARDS

(named in honour of our mascot, Russell 'The Rooster' Crowes, who appears on our masthead)
Head to the website or SMS to vote for your favourite emerging Australian performer for the:

Fledgling Award (Audience Choice)

This award will offer the winner a package to return to MICF in 2008 with the support of:
A package including design, printing and promotion for their 2008 Melbourne International Comedy Season, editorial coverage in The Pun, membership to online arts portal Arts Hub, a limited edition "The Pun" Crumpler bag and more to be announced.

Fine print: In keeping with our motto of supporting local and emerging talent, the performer(s) need to fit the following short criteria:

- performer(s) need to be under 30 years of age
- contain artist(s) from our own shores
- features artist(s) who has not performed as a solo artist or group for more than three years in MICF

VOTE VIA WWW.THEPUN.COM.AU OR 0415 880 776

While you're busy putting forward your votes, we're busy counting the votes for our judge's choice awards.

Flying High Award (Judges Choice)

This package will be awarded to a show which:

- adds a different element or perspective to MICF
- flies in the face of the conservative and ordinary
- features artist(s) who has not performed as a solo artist or group for more than three years in MICF
- features artists from our own shores

For the lucky winner, a package including full payment of registration fees for Melbourne International Comedy Festival 2008, a promotion package including design, printing, publicity, advertising and distribution, membership to online arts portal Arts Hub, a limited edition "The Pun" Crumpler bag and more to be announced.

Join our mailing list at WWW.THEPUN.COM.AU to stay up to date on who receives a Crower!

The Pun - we're doin' it for the kids

WWW.THEPUN.COM.AU



3 for the Price of 1

Mitchell Diamond

Greg Fleet, Hung Le and Gab Rossi have a reputation of being the three most famous Victorian comedians. If anything, this is an understatement of their talent. The show *3 for the Price of 1* takes place at the famous and excellent Comic's Lounge. Three stand-up acts make the night one to remember. If you're looking for a fun night out, this act is the one for you.

The jokes were everywhere, and quite funny. The comedians made fun of strange accents, the weird practices of the Commonwealth Games baton relay, and the weird attempts to

escape the Games. There were also some fun songs to add to the evening.

Whether it was Hung Le's hilarious vacation, or Greg Fleet's attempts to discover the truth about a small Australian town, there was hardly a dull moment. That said, the humour is probably not appropriate to all. There's a fair bit of adult humour, which was funny but should be considered before tickets are bought.

3 for the Price of 1 is \$25 for the show itself or \$50 for the show and nice meal. This is definitely something you should check out during this year's comedy festival. ♡



Adam Hills - Joymonger

Kelly Griffin

Comedy's proverbial 'nice guy' Adam Hill delivers a stand-up performance that is just as you'd expect: jovial, feel good and funny for all the right reasons. After living up to his reputation as the comedian who does his own introductions, Hills spent what seemed like the first 15 minutes of his show darting backwards and forwards up the Forum's many stairs to greet audience members, reinforcing just how nice a guy he really is.

In fact, when an audience member, who was born in Australia and whose parents grew up in Australia, claimed she was Irish, much to the audience's laughter and bemusement, Hills tried to stick up for her. Other comedians, such as the Wil Andersons of the comedy world, would have jumped at the chance to quite rightly rip her to shreds.

Once he got started, Hills delivered a loosely themed conventional stand-up routine packed with spot-on accents and endearing anecdotes told with bubbling enthusiasm. His show *Joymonger* is vaguely based on the idea that no-matter how strange, backward and nonsensical our society—its laws and peoples—seems at times, all you can do in the face of adversity (and

stupidity) is grin and dance.

Hills is inarguably a talented comedian and storyteller whose charm shines on the Forum Theatre's stunning stage. My only criticism is that his show is a little too nice and too safe. I would have liked to see Hills do a show that was a bit bolder and challenging.

Nevertheless, this is an endearing routine, and if you are after a no-fail, fluffy comic show, then Adam Hills is one safe bet. ♡



Adam Richard X

Richard Watts

In *Adam Richard X*, the gay Melbourne comic best known for regular appearances on FoxFM's 'Matt and Jo' breakfast show celebrates his tenth year in stand-up with a brand new show.

Not surprisingly, much of the material covers familiar ground—celebrity gossip, Kylie Minogue, Bindi Irwin and the delicious vapidness of pop culture—essentially, the same topics Adam addresses on radio and also in his Channel 10 appearances. Rounding out the material is a hefty dose of queer culture, which

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for some audience members on Friday night didn't seem to sit entirely comfortably, judging from the odd squirm and the nervous expression of the cute boofhead sitting in front of me.

Adam's musing on one night stands and Gaydar profiles was entertaining, but lacked a certain spice. That could be explained by the fact that the show was still finding its legs and didn't flow as smoothly as it no doubt would later in its season. Consequently, it was billed as a preview, with ticket prices discounted accordingly.

As Adam himself said, "You get what you pay for, people!"

On the plus side, he had some touching observations about death and funerals, in which the usually bitchy (in a good way) comedian showed a tender side.

Adam's shtick won't satisfy everyone, and if you know his style, you know what you're in for with this show: it's entertaining without being innovative, and consists largely of a series of well-aimed barbs seasoned with buggery and leavened with a dash of mortality. ♡

All of Me: The M n ge Dubois Story

Pat McGrath

In previous years, West End musicals have been a recurring subject of satire and ridicule at Melbourne's comedy festival. John Forman, Aurora Keith and Richard Vette, from the show *All of Me: the M n ge Dubois Story*, are keen to continue that tradition by giving minimal homage to an otherwise grandiose medium.

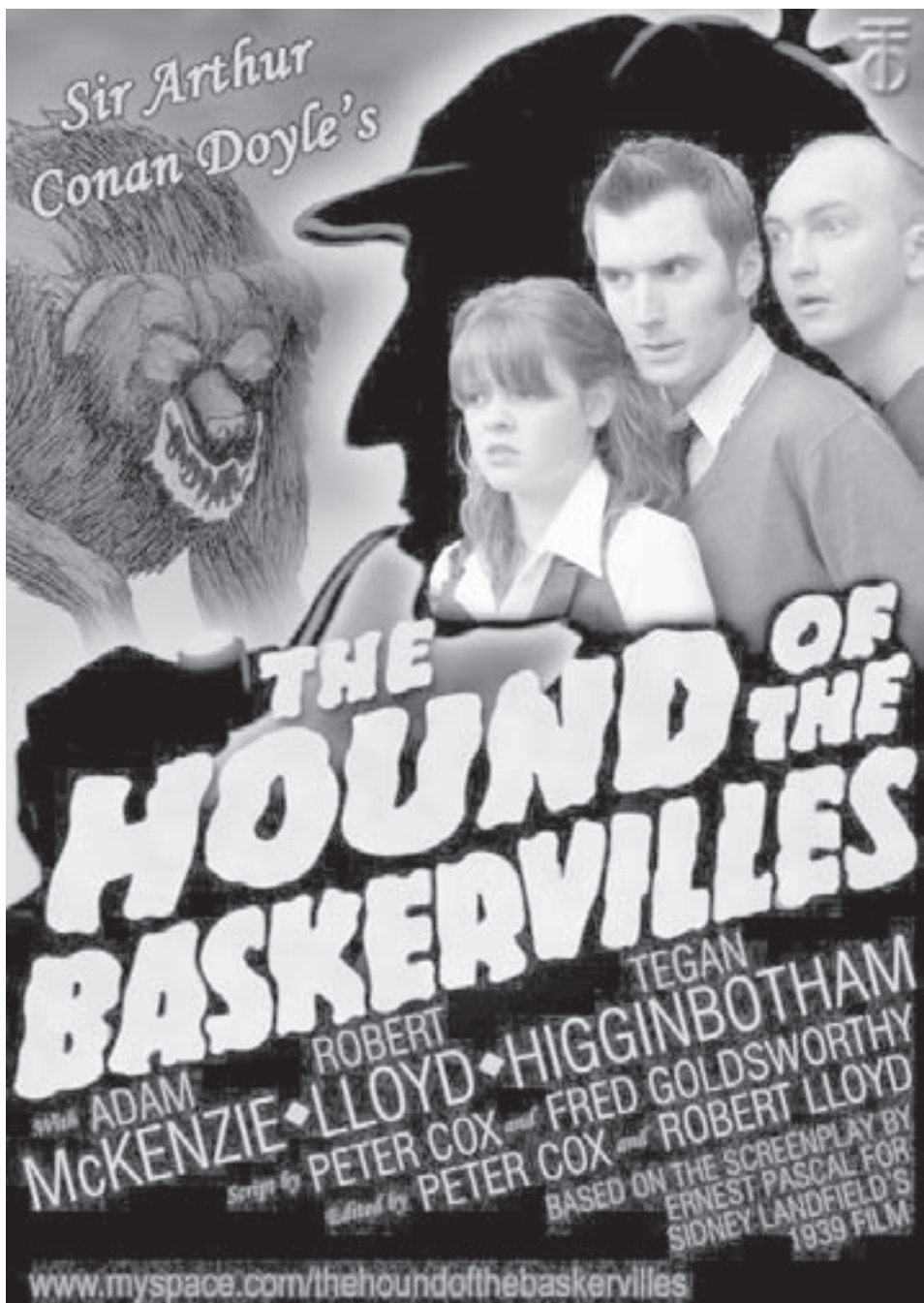
The sparsely directed show traces the rise and fall of M n ge Dubois, a bashful young girl from

Dubbo in NSW, who wows the theatre establishment with her jazz rendition of 'All of Me' and with her impersonation of a regurgitating seagull.

Inevitably, her rise to international stardom is fleeting. After surviving an assassination attempt and the death of her billionaire husband Onassis, Dubois drunkenly performs to an empty RSL club. But all is not lost.

John Forman, also of The Four Noels, shines as the aged Dubois, and as her Michael C  ne-inspired agent. He spends much of the show mocking members of the audience: yet another reminder to never sit in the front row. Richard Vette is outstanding as the poised choreographer with an indeterminable accent, and Aurora Keith's understated physical comedy seems almost inexhaustible.

The highly energetic show is superbly directed and faultlessly performed, and proves yet again that costume design can win a surprising quantity of laughter: especially with Vette's obscenely tight overalls. *All of Me* shows that English singer from the 1960s, Dusty Springfield, got off lightly.  



Alzheimer's the Musical: A Night to Remember

Richard Watts

Alzheimer's the Musical: A Night to Remember is a three-woman show, performed by Lyn Shakespeare, Maureen Sherlock and Carole Yelland who were the team behind the award-winning *Tragic at their Age*.

Their latest Melbourne International Comedy Festival



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show combined sketch comedy with cleverly re-worked songs. For example, the Skyhooks hit 'Living in the 70s' was transformed into 'Living in my 70s'. *Alzheimer's the Musical: A Night to Remember* explores life from the perspective of a senior citizen.

With both charisma and panache, Shakespeare, Sherlock and Yelland delivered jokes, covering everything about getting older, losing your memory and dealing with society's attitudes towards the elderly.

Unfortunately, one or two interludes did not gel with the bulk of Shakespeare, Sherlock and Yelland's comic material.

These were usually attempts at poignancy. Another instance was the jarring appearance of a granddaughter character.

Nonetheless, I found *Alzheimer's the Musical: A Night to Remember* to be a rich, warm and well-delivered show.  



Amelia Jane Hunter

is Keith Flipp (the Girl from Belkondowns Flat)

Richard Watts

Amelia Jane Hunter is Keith Flipp (the Girl from Belkondowns Flat) is a darkly comic show bordering on fringe theatre. Despite containing elements of character-based stand-up, the show and Hunter's larger-than-life character were clearly confrontational for some audience members the night I saw it.

At first glance, Keith Flipp is a drag queen. We soon learn he's not a man pretending to be a woman (Or, to be precise, a woman



playing a man pretending to be a woman.); he really is a man, trapped in a woman's body, his sister's body.

Amelia was an eight pound baby girl who grew into a seven-year-old boy. In scientific terms, she's a chimera—also known as vanishing twin syndrome—a person whose body contains two different sets of genetic material as a result of one fetus being absorbed into the other in utero. In this instance, though, the two personalities have survived in one body, with startling results.

Keith is only let out for one week every three months by his sister, during which time he takes drugs, fucks around, and moonlights as a drag queen. What happens, though, when Keith decides to no longer play by his conservative sister's rules?

Hunter, a trained actor, brings real pathos to this Lynchian scenario, as well as confronting humour and some truly delightful and memorable scenes. Not a show for the easily offended, but definitely one to see if you're interested in catching a remarkable performer in a complex and well-rounded production. 🐣

Andrea Powell in *How Do You Like Your Eggs?*

Richard Watts

Perhaps best known for her monstrous harridan Ethel Chop, Andrea Powell ensconced on a chair in this simply staged show before an unfortunately small audience.

Just as unfortunate was the fact that my companion Lisa and I decided to sit in the front row, resulting in both of us being roped into the audience participation segments of the evening.

If you have ever seen me trying to salsa, you will know that I provided several moments of utter hilarity for the few people present.

Exploring the ins and outs of modern dating—including where to meet men, RSVP.com and speed dating—Powell's barbed wit and measured, precise delivery were a delightful tonic after some previous show I have suffered through.

Although, I could have lived without the intrusive plug of Ethel Chop's book.

Overall, *Andrea Powell in How Do You Like Your Eggs?* offered a strong, sharply observed and well-structured evening of stand-up comedy, which was complete with restrained use of audio-visual (Keep an eye out for Andrea's pussy—it is a hoot!) and a few

deftly presented minor characters to keep the narrative moving.

The show's middle third needs some tightening and caused the energy to drop a little, and Powell's humour occasionally borders on the savage. Nevertheless, I would heartily recommend this production. 🐣



Andy Zaltzman

Detonates 60 Minutes of Unbridled Evening

Rachael Howlett

A first time visitor to the Melbourne International Comedy Festival, Andy Zaltzman promises to attempt to solve all the world's problems in 60 minutes. He acknowledges it's a tall order for our world leaders let alone a cricket-loving English comedian.

Zaltzman explores how he would explain the state of the world to his new daughter. He covers an array of political and familiar topics. From the War on Terror to fair trade, immigration and the environment, Zaltzman applies a satirical spin that's a bit hit and miss.



**FROM THE WAR
ON TERROR TO
FAIR TRADE,
IMMIGRATION
AND THE
ENVIRONMENT,
ZALTZMAN
APPLIES A
SATIRICAL SPIN**

He successfully uses sport as an analogy for the times we live in. Whether it's applying the rules of cricket to government or using the World Cup draw to determine wars within the UN, Zaltzman articulates his politics with some good one-liners.

He relaxed more as the show progressed, using his audience surveys to garner some of the bigger laughs and replaced dead gags with a funny dance.

Yet after being billed as 'the best political comedian in the business ...' (I think they've forgotten Rod Quantock.), Zaltzman fails to follow through. Instead, he provides a patchy performance for which he frequently apologises.

Indeed at the end of his show, he thanks us for being not just an audience but a focus group and promises the show will be better by the end of the festival. I hope so because on preview night, Andy Zaltzman was caught out. 🐣

Austen Tayshus *The Merchant of Menace*

Ewan Gordon

Austen Tayshus is a name just about every Australian should be familiar with. His piece *Australiana* was one of our country's biggest exports some years ago. I'm sure I'm not alone when I say I grew up listening to it as a child, trying to memorise it word for word.



However, Austen's latest show, *The Merchant of Menace*, did not evoke the same feelings. Yes, it is funny. Possibly blurring the line of political incorrectness, but what is good comedy if it doesn't blur the lines occasionally?

There were, for lack of a better term, low points throughout the show, when jokes were taken past the point of being funny. The material in *Merchant of Menace* would feel more at home in bars across the wide brown land of ours, rather than its current setting.

Hardly a reinvention of the form, Austen Tayshus doesn't shy away from interacting with his audience, often using audience members to draw inspiration and better focus his work to appeal to the mass populous.

Craig Millar does an excellent job of supporting the show. Although the two artists come from different times, they both seem to have a mental link in regards to political views, which is quite possibly the reason for the pairing. I await a future solo show from Millar, who certainly seems capable of such an event. 🍷

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Annual Gala

Bels Hillard

The Gala combines 25 comedians over three and a half hours in a packed Regent Theatre. As a festival institution, it usually has an overabundance of comedic talent. This year was no exception.

Adam Hills proved again why he's Australia's best comedian, and Corinne Grant, local comedy's leading lady, impressed with her superb wit. Justin Hamilton and Shappi Khorsandi made Gala

debuts in style. Jason Byrne returned with more riotous audience participation.

Tom Gleeson's Middle East trip tales had everyone wondering if he went to perform for the troops or for the wealth of comedic material. The exceptional Tim Minchin was back with his incomparable musical stylings, and Fiona O'Loughlin's crazy motherhood tales had everyone hoping their own mother doesn't talk that way about them!

Stephen K Amos made a welcome return, showing that a little local research goes a long way. Mark Watson was the night's revelation with a brilliant spot that earned him more than a few fans, while the team from Puppet Up! showed off their phenomenal talent and why they're this year's hottest ticket.

Tripod bravely moved from the 'Sweet Caroline' antics to take over Rod Quantock's political mantle, and Ed Byrne had the tired crowd in fits of laughter showing how talented he is, despite being the second last act.

Of course there were more, but these are the memorable acts who made my must-see list for this year's festival because they're all damn good. 🍷



Benn Bennett *In a Baltic State*

Katee Le Cornu

I had grave concerns about any comedic endeavour involving Eastern Europe because Sacha Baron Cohen's Borat is still firmly etched on my retinas. Especially a comedic endeavour in cabaret. But Benn Bennett pulls it off. His hour-long show at the Butterfly Club in South Melbourne had all us pundits laughing.

This is the first time Bennett has performed at the festival in a one-man show. His stony facial gestures as he moves through such delights as 'Push It', 'Boy in Yalta', 'Man from Prague', to the discordant twang of 'bad' guitar-based keyboard, punctuated by the heady atmosphere created from a single, badly-lit disco ball, only adds to his theme and comedic effect.

Not every comedian can threaten acts of violence—with balls—against Cinderella whilst dressed in a red headband. Bennett's wardrobe choice creates an impoverished John McEnroe feel. Hearing Babushkas described as stinky will stay with pundits. In fact, you'll never quite look at a whale, a Lada Nikki or coleslaw the same.

Some of his frames of reference were lost on the crowd, but Eric from Poland's Elvis impersonation, singing Jail House Rock, generated belly laughs from all. Structurally, it was the high point of the show and would have been a great way to end. But no. Bennett leaves us with the imaging of a disturbing Rosary blessing. Don't worry, Benn. I'm sure there's a specialist cabbage that could cure that. 🍷





Best of the Edinburgh Fest

Gillian Terzis

If one were to compare the *Best of the Edinburgh Fest* to a culinary establishment, it would be a bogan-free Sizzler. With the allure of three internationally acclaimed stand-up acts for the price of one, it is the perfect synthesis between economic good-sense and humour, and also provides a veritable smorgasbord of comedic stylings to suit all tastes.

Emceed by hyperwired Irishman Andrew Stanley, an intercontinental trio of comedians from Australia, Ireland and the United States took to the stage of RMIT's Capitol Theatre, each with a distinct brand of wit and silliness.

One unearthed a comedic gem in the form of Asher Treleven. The range of his vocal timbre was showcased in an inspired reading of a Mills and Boon novel to great comic effect. He also managed an inimitable dancefloor salute to Space Invaders. Hilarious!

Maeve Higgins was endearingly gawky and chortle-worthy, but slightly inconsistent. Her self-conscious awkwardness was a



point of engagement for the audience, as was her quirky take on everyday banalities.

Eddie Ifft was the comedic anchorman of the show, and it was only fitting that he brought the house down, and then some. Some of the gags were predictable, but let's face it: jokes about midgets, Amsterdam, Adelaide and the Australian vernacular tend to deliver in spades.

As long as you're not from Adelaide or searching for incisive political satire, the *Best of the Edinburgh Festival* is a great night out. Nothing too groundbreaking, but any humour pangs will be satiated nonetheless. 🐘

Charlie Pickering *Impractical Jokes*

Richard Watts

After a traditional start spent padding out the wait for latecomers with some easy laughs generated by jokes about lawyers, ninjas and accidentally fighting for the Taliban, Pickering got stuck into his show proper, which celebrates his love for his



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Burlesque Idol

Chloe Walker

I don't get this show. On the one hand, it features three highly polished, superbly entertaining burlesque performances. On the other hand, these are couched within a plodding, cringe-worthy panel-style show complete with fading rock star jokes and mullet wigs. One minute, we're sucked in by a striptease; the next, we're shifting uncomfortably in our seats as the host and judges 'pretend' to sexually harass the stars.

The acts change from one night to the next, but we were treated to three consummate performers. Lola the Vamp is classic in the Edwardian sense as she slides out of a corset and satin bustle. Natasha the Pasha's frothy feather dance is sexy and silly, and National Institute of Circus Arts graduate Marawa hoolas more hoops than I could feasibly lift.

The girls have serious talent, their costumes are spectacular, and most on the roster have toured internationally. So I don't understand why they're letting a bunch of C-grade actors ride on their coat-tails (well – frilly knickers) when they could do so well without them.

Burlesque has had to work hard to separate itself from your garden-variety stripping, and

the smutty jokes in Idol are embarrassing and undignified. Feminists will hate this show, but not because of the striptease.

It's still worth seeing—try to arrive late to miss the dragging introduction. It's your choice as to whether you stay until the end, when the abandoned host gets his kit off and takes us somewhere my friend Clem would call 'Flavour Country'. 🐘



father and, specifically, his father's love of elaborate practical jokes.

Thence followed a long—overly long, judging by the anxious and slightly irritated expressions on the front-of-house staff's faces at its conclusion—series of stories about practical jokes, counter jokes, and a state of virtual warfare between 'Two households, both alike in dignity...from ancient grudge break to new mutiny.'

Sadly, unlike the familiar story of Shakespeare's Montagues and Capulets, there really wasn't enough material to sustain for an hour Pickering's admittedly well-timed retelling of what are, essentially, amusing family anecdotes.

This was a preview show so, of course, Pickering will gain a stronger grasp of his material over time. And *Impractical Jokes* was well-constructed both thematically and in terms of its narrative.

But, perhaps, the material is more suited to being told over the dinner table or a few beers than on stage at Melbourne International Comedy Festival. A low point, in which Pickering segued into an aimless and clearly improvised conversation between himself and a parking meter, was a clear indication that, charismatic as he is, the tousle-haired Pickering needs stronger material if he's going to live up to his reputation. 🐘

Christina Davis - *Sex*

Matthew Buschmann

Straight to the point with the title (the posters too), then hammered home with a raunchy pole-dancing introduction (not Davis, yet). It was a good start. The standard R18+ tag dressed in comedic voiceover confirmed our hopes. We all knew what we were in for: lots of dirty jokes, fetish fun and phallic humour. Sex slides itself into nearly every comedian's routine at some stage. So just think of Davis as the one who used it too much, and turned nympho. She takes the stage brimming with confidence and scripted material, typical tramp regalia and flourish of braids in tow. Not a seat un-bummed in the scatter of tables. A crowd relaxed in the mellow light and suggestive music as Davis flew straight from a teasing overview into the history of sex, drawn from google and other comically credible references in a stereotypical female perspective. She goes on to cover it all, no list needed; you've all got imaginations.



Her punchline gags are often driven by shock value, at times exaggerated into redundancy, and offered in high-pitched brat-like inflections; don't sit too close to the speakers. While a few of her runs are predictable, Davis wins roaring laughter with some original gems and well placed run-ons. The show is broken up mid-coitus with footage of reality infidelity show 'Cheaters' and audio from phone-sex line Dial-a-Granny, both of which seemed to get the most consistent laughs of the night. Good, though not great. Davis has a strong stage presence, but falls short of the mark built up by her topic. Topped off well with a hilariously goofy strip tease. 🍷

WHILE A FEW OF
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PLACED RUN-ONS

City Head

Matthew Buschmann

Moppets (Don't mess with Henson.) and Lego—you can't go wrong! Promising Melbourne theatre company Sticky Apple Legs combine musical theatre, puppetry, comedy, and a sharp script from successful playwright Tom Taylor in the world premiere second show. It's the first of its kind to deal, through comedy, with the exceptionally rare condition (so rare it escapes research) of 'city head'—a society living in your brain. The performance started even before the audience was



ushered to the show room from the ballroom bar. Puppeteer and actor Troy Larkin slipped into the union-flagged hall with Doc, a sociable, touchy-feely moppet with a dramatic South Park-esque voice. A similar entrance was made into the tiny Evatt Room. He stroked faces, joked on a physical appearances, then reassured, 'It's ok...I'm a doctor.' Sitting face to face with the moppets in such an intimate environment provides a fresh and surreal experience for festival-goers. *City Head* achieves comedy through each medium utilised during its performance, from the lively dioramas populated with animated Lego characters, to the consistent moppet voices and personalities. It also alludes to our impact on earth and our lack of vision in dealing with problems. Sticky Apple Legs aims to provide high quality original work on a low budget. They accomplished their mission with effective use of front-row torch lighting effects and the simplicity of the Lego medium. The storyline, although short, is absorbing and entertaining, and the labour poured into the moppets and dioramas is effective. Well worth a nibble. 🍷

Comedian Sandwich Delicious

Kate Blanch

Comedian *Sandwich Delicious* features three young Australian comics with wildly different styles who come together to deliver a solid, entertaining hour of comedy. Mat Kenneally compered the evening and opened the show strongly. He was comfortable on stage and provided plenty of laughs throughout the night. His material was highly topical, but his likeable and engaging manner ensured that his rantings on religion, politics and everything in between were never nasty or bitter. Bec Hill appeared next, with an observational and self-deprecating style that had the audience giggling and smiling with recognition. An incongruous mix of punk and born-again Christianity, she poked fun at herself (and her sex life). Her jokes about the tension between her hormones and her higher moral ground were a true highlight. Bec won over the crowd with her seemingly limitless supplies of energy and joy. The final performer was Rob Hunter who had a range of jokes designed to appeal to the audience's inner nerd. While the previous acts were more conversational in style, Rob's

performance was very tightly scripted. The material was well-constructed and the jokes had plenty of bite. Alongside his witty one-liners were some slightly more involved jokes that crept up on the audience slowly but brilliantly. *Comedian Sandwich Delicious* takes place in a relaxed and intimate setting, complete with a random assortment of fold-up chairs and semi-broken couches. The show is a great option for those seeking a 'grassroots' comedy experience that doesn't compromise on laughs. 🍷



Courteney Hocking

Un-Australian

Tom Arup

Courteney Hocking's show plays in the Banner Room at Trade's Hall, important only because the room is oppressively small.

'God, I hope she doesn't bomb cause there'll be nowhere to hide,' one member of the audience says before Hocking begins.

She doesn't bomb, but she doesn't excel.

It's a little hard on Hocking to be playing this room, as it's quite obvious, quite quickly, when a joke doesn't work. Luckily, Hocking's material worked often enough, avoiding too many of these moments.

Mainly focusing on Australian culture, with a slightly political edge, she covers topics from immigration to Germaine Greer. An Andrew Bolt piece worked especially well with the festival's vaguely left audience.

However, Hocking's comedy was possibly too familiar. At one point, she played a Jonathan Coleman vinyl that covered 'Aussie songs' for almost no other reason but to celebrate its naff value.

Hocking played the obvious—Australians are a bit lame, a bit racist—too often. The show was punctuated with too many observations better said after

one to many glasses of wine at a dinner party, than to an audience. I wanted Hocking to explore the content from more interesting angles and while, at times, she tried to draw the material together, it never really formed a cohesive whole.

For those happy with relatively entertaining 'John Howard is a bit crap' material, Hocking's show may be worth squeezing into the Banner Room for. For those looking to be taken a bit further, there might be greener pastures. 🐨



Daniel Townes

Wendy Claughton

Daniel Townes is a small-name comedian with a big talent. He has been a busy man since I last saw him: travelling the world working on his stand-up, making friends with pickpockets in London, getting kicked out of America (Yes, you read that right.).

Even if those last two don't necessarily sound like much fun, they are at least funny as presented by Townes in an hour of laid-back stand-up (and sit-down). From doing his own intro (and laughing about it) to musings on the people who call phone-in polls just to register their indecision, Townes comfortably guides his audience through the somewhat rambling pathways of his mind.

In particular, the deportation material is excellent, an example of how real life can be funnier than anything one can make up (and an object lesson in being a smart-arse to authority figures).

There is a lot of interaction with audience members, and Townes dealt well with some slightly tipsy, parroting hecklers, which speaks volumes for the confidence he's developed. Onstage, he carries himself with a kind of relaxed ease. Even when the jokes don't quite come off, you sense he's enjoying himself. That enthusiasm is contagious.

The Locker Room is an intimate venue, and it really suits Townes's style. It feels like you're sitting down with a mate, discussing the ridiculousness of life. I really enjoyed myself, and highly recommend him to anyone tired of seeing the big names coast on their reputations. 🐨



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Daniel Kitson

It's the fireworks talking

Richard Watts

No one will be surprised to read that Daniel Kitson's *It's the fireworks talking* was a great show, that it was wiping-the-tears-from-your-eyes funny.

This show was, by turns, surreal, whimsical, charming, hilarious and touching.

In a rambling, wide-ranging show, Kitson embraced childhood memories. As he reminisced about staying up all night long, youthful friendships, relationships between children and their parents, nostalgia, death-bed memories and much more, the English stand-up comedian kept almost all of the audience in the palm of his indeed.



Not everyone in his audience at this year's Melbourne International Comedy Festival found it funny, though. Two people walked out of his performance at the Athenaeum Theatre. The pair complained that they had not laughed once during the show, and Kitson seemed to thrive on the challenge.

Despite his jetlag, he lifted the intensity of his stand-up performance up another notch.

It's the fireworks talking ran for two hours, which was half an hour over the amount of time it had been allotted. Save for the first fifteen to twenty minutes when Kitson seemed to be underwhelmed by his own material, this show was an utter delight. 🐼

WITHOUT
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CAUSTIC HIGH
SCHOOL COMEDY
FOR THE
TEENAGE GIRL
IN ALL OF US

The Debutante Diaries

Richard Watts

Written and performed by Kate McLennan, *The Debutante Diaries* won Best Comedy and Best Newcomer awards at last year's Melbourne Fringe Festival. Watching it at this year's comedy festival, it's so easy to see why.

Deftly and effectively, McLennan maps out a series of characters who are planning for their grand appearance at Libra



Hills High Debutante Ball.

The characters include the sweet and sad Sophie, the bitch-queen Krystaal Jones, and ambitious social-climber Stacey. Along the way we're also introduced to Guy Gerrity, the sleazy phys-ed teacher who's organising the show; Carla, the bitter lefty teacher whose life is so empty she even fakes her own orgasms; and a range of other students, including Krystaal's footy-hero boyfriend, and Stacey's gay best friend.

The Debutante Diaries is a beautifully realised show. It balances pathos and hilarity, and it builds with immaculate timing to an ending that, although slightly underplayed, stayed true to the awkwardly endearing tone established in the opening scenes of the show.

Without props, on a bare stage, McLennan shifts from character to character using only the simplest of lighting and sound queues, creating a caustic high school comedy for the teenage girl in all of us.

Less character-driven stand-up and more a one-woman theatrical performance, this is a Melbourne International Comedy Festival show that I heartily recommend. 🐼

The Department of Humour Services

Bianca Durrant

Is there an abattoir next to your child care centre? Find out what happens when you under-stimulate intelligent people, who are quick of wit, with jobs in the public service. For relief, they default to wicked extra-curricular activities,



and *The Department of Humour Services* gives one such display of a successful pursuit down the dark road of stand up comedy. Three public servants take us on a journey of Dilbert-esque desk experiences.

Top shelf Town Planner and self-confessed Sign Approver, Ben Lomas takes us through the daily protocols of correct business card exchange and competitive office morning tea grievances procedures. Standing out as a definitive highlight is the sharp wit of Elvin Ho, clearly a self-starter, who spends his days in the office challenging the mechanisms of public service workplace inclusive practices with his self-ridiculing racist toilet graffiti campaign. Scott Steensma leads, in true grey-suit style, a question time/press conference at the end of the show giving the audience the chance to probe into the murky depths of these hardworking, and perhaps pharmaceutically-oriented, taxpayer-funded characters.

If your office workplace has an upcoming planning meeting to plan the operational plan, then this is the show for you. 🐼



Dylan Moran

Chloe Walker

So you missed out on tickets for Dylan Moran, and you're reading this review to see if he was shit so that you can stop kicking yourself for not being more organised, because you love watching 'Black Books' and you wanted to know if Moran is just like Bernard Black in real life, and you never get to go out and it's not fair etc.



Well, prepare yourself because I have bad news. Moran was marvellous. He was very, very funny. He is just like Bernard—obstreperous, acerbic, surreal and slightly harried. His hair was unbrushed and he shouted a lot about vegetarians, cows and other sundry absurd topics. But there were a couple of problems.

He walked onto the stage carrying a glass of wine in one hand, and a couple of bowls balanced precariously in the other. The bowls were full of jaffas, which he threw at the audience, and fruit, which he railed against. The fruit and lollies were there to aid him through sixty cigarette-free minutes.

Problem number one—no smoking. Nicotine aids focus. Moran kept checking his watch throughout the show, cursing every time because it wasn't over yet.

Secondly, he didn't even finish the glass of vino, and I spent the whole show waiting for him to get drunk so he could really let rip. There's something really wrong about wishing a comedian would destroy himself just a little bit more for your entertainment. But it was only a mild disappointment that he didn't. 🐘

Evan Jones- Extravaganza Pandemonium and Comic Spectacular

Bianca Durrant



I DIDN'T WANT
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BUT I CAN'T
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THEN THINK
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OF ELBOWSKIN.
THEY ARE JUST
AS GOOD...
SERIOUSLY

Be prepared for a show that is so all-over the place you won't know what day it is, what to expect next, or if the voices in Evan Jones's head are real or not. This schizophrenic act, probably quite like of a meander through Evan Jones's day, is humble, accessible and addictively entertaining.

That's what coming to comedy festival is all about—a new experience with someone you wouldn't invite, for reasons of personal safety, to entertain you in your own home. And, for censorship reasons, someone you would never see on commercial television, even at late night.

But it will always be safe, as Jones quite responsibly offers a range of self help and group therapy options. Take Screaming Therapy, which can be used as a resolution tool in bumpy relationships, or the very voluntary All Male Group Hug, on stage, with sexy name calling.

Jones's grasp of audience dynamics and his ability to engage in a non-linear way enables this journey through his unique and wholly real internal psycho-scape. At the end, you'll be left with a few very interesting pontifications on goldfish souls and their roles in exorcisms... 🐘

Elbowskin Sparring Partners

Matt Heath

Ern and Dave of Sparring Partners celebrate their 10 year anniversary as mates. Thank God they met and decided to put together a comedy duo (dubbed Elbowskin) because this year's show is better than ever.

With a mix of music, skits, multimedia projections and jokes, it could easily fall in a heap but this experienced team effortlessly pulls off a hilarious hour of laughs.

The show is perfectly balanced and the second you've finished laughing at the last song, there's something new to watch on the screen. Before you've recovered, Elbowskin bound back on stage to knock you out with more.

The highlight is the musical comedy—short, clever, sometimes twisted songs performed so enthusiastically that you can't help singing along if you're not laughing so much.

I didn't want to do the comparison thing. It's too obvious, but I can't help it. Think Tripod, and then think Dave and Ern of Elbowskin. They are just as good...seriously.

Although it was the opening night preview and it wasn't a sell out, it didn't matter to the boys. They clearly loved being on stage. The hour passed so quickly that

I wanted to see them again and again; it's that kind of show. Make sure you see them before 'Sold Out' appears on their posters. 🐘



Fiona O'Loughlin

Travers Purton

Billed as 'Australia's first lady of comedy', Fiona O'Loughlin, much as it pains me to kowtow to such statements, did not disappoint. The mother of five and wife to one from Alice Springs has built up quite a following in Melbourne over five years of festival shows and television appearances. A show of hands from the audience revealed a majority of first-time attendees, resulting in a recap of her life to get the crowd up to speed.

Fiona's material is based on what she portrays as a careless disregard for the conventions of motherhood. Revisiting the comedy gold of 'my children say the darndest things', she scrutinises the machinations of her copious litter to great comic effect throughout the show. Hers is an ethos of pinot over parenting. Finely extracted details from



her everyday life are delivered with a grin and a laugh, giving you the feeling that each joke is spontaneous and new.

The laughter, and there is plenty of laughter, comes from recognition of the negative sentiments you may have about people's children but never expected their mother to say. Her stage persona is natural and well-developed. Seldom do you feel you are watching scripted 'bits,' because it's more like a wine-infused chat with friends. I have long harboured the suspicion that there are very few, if any, good female stand-up comedians (I am not being sexist-go on, name five right now!) but I was wrong. Fiona O'Loughlin is very, very funny. 🍷

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The First Step on a Tram is Hell

Fifi Trixabell-L'Amore

There surely isn't a more intimate festival venue than La Mama on Carlton's Faraday Street. For an audience receptive to an evening of close-up comedy, this is the ideal theatre. Although for a performer, the nearness of the viewers must border on claustrophobic. I can't help but have the utmost respect for Sue Ingleton who braved the La Mama stage without so much as a flicker of apprehension in what was the first night of her show's run.

You'd expect nothing less from a woman whose bio paints her as 'Australia's leading political feminist comedian'. Ingleton's presence is commanding without ever being overbearing.

The show's greatest strength lies in Ingleton's ability to flawlessly pass from one distinctive

character—the coarse but compassionate Bill Rawlings—to the other, the doddering but not-quite-as-vague-as-she-makes-out Edith Wise. By using both these characters as well as her own out-of-character personal experiences, Ingleton presents some gently amusing observations about the peculiarities of old age.

It probably goes without saying that *The First Step on a Tram is Hell* is not a show aimed at the same people who will be going to see Danny Bhoy or Stephen K Amos. It will not appeal to them. However, the show targets, and deserves, a niche in the Melbourne International Comedy Festival 'market'. It is certainly recommended if intimacy and a lack of antiseptic polish are what you're looking for in your comedy-going adventures. 🍷



For We are Young and Free

Rosa Ellen

For We Are Young and Free begins with a reflection on the significance of 'girt' from Peter Dodds McCormack (Michael Roper), composer of our National Anthem, and moves, revue-like, into a political debate between a struggling dad (Dylan Lloyd) and his opinionated teenage daughter (Emily O'Brien-Brown) over the kitchen table.

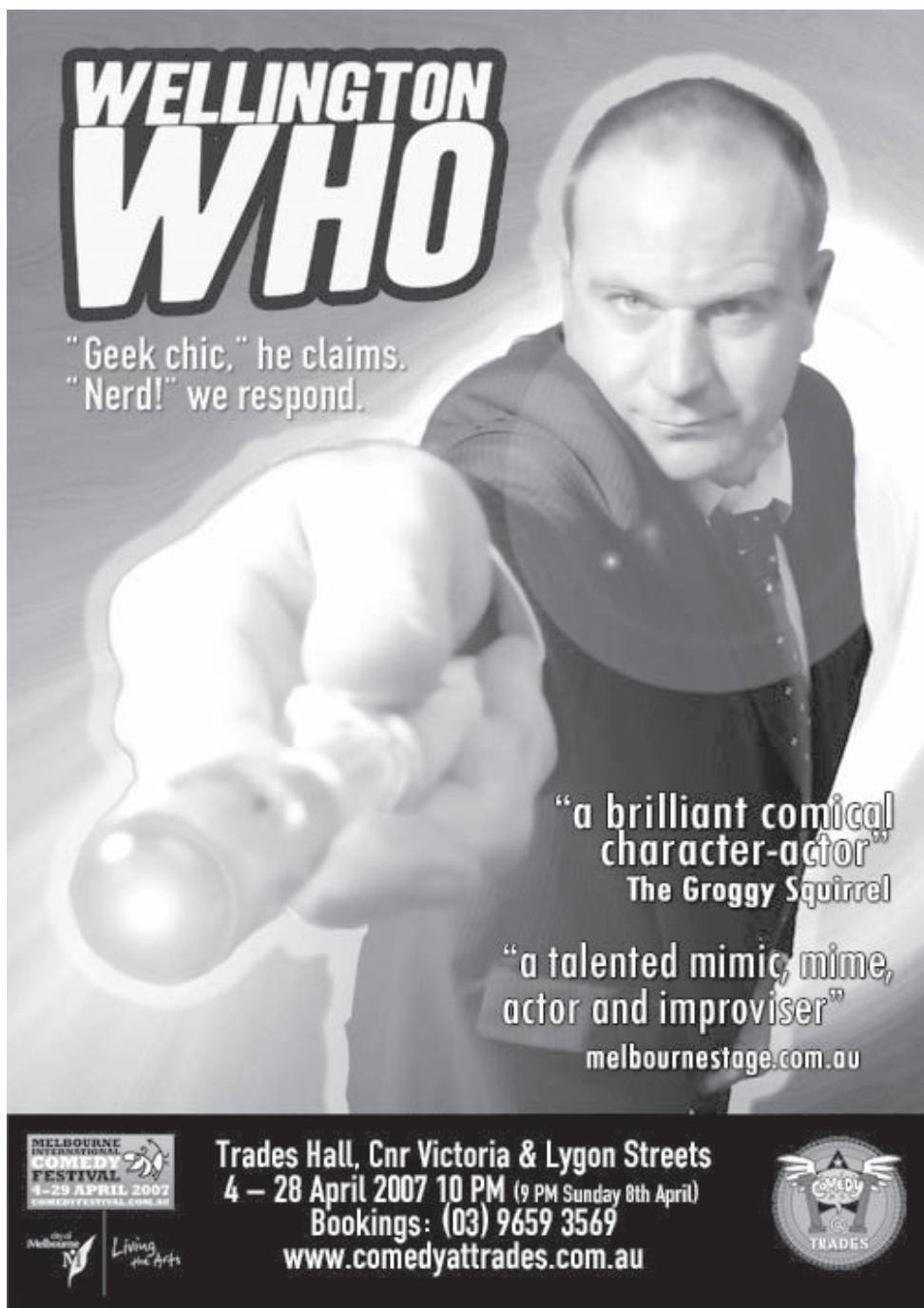
For We Are Young and Free is a quick-witted theatre piece, injected with daggy dad humour with a serious undertone. Canvassing the state of Australian pop culture and politics (where democratic values are best exemplified on 'Dancing With the Stars' and with a lasting cultural icon that is an American-owned sandwich spread), writer and director Lorin Clarke searches for the 'identity' vein in our culture and finds it hiding.

Defining ourselves has been a popular preoccupation lately. Clarke approaches the idea of 'Us' and what we stand for with a comic flair that is smart and accessible, although there are a few times when the humour becomes a little obvious.

Taking leave from the dismal reality of contemporary pop icons, Clarke summons a bookish Paris Hilton (Miriam Glaser) to give

a (very funny) presentation on the humanitarian crisis in Sudan. There is also an appearance by Jane Austen. Dylan Lloyd's subtle timing is particularly funny as he (unknowingly) attempts to defend Australia's political integrity from lyrics by Ani Di Franco. Four good performances make *For We Are Young and Free* an intelligent and good value piece of comic theatre. 🍷





Fox K is Looking for Emily

Chloe Walker

Everyone has a tale of the one that got away. For Fox K, it's Emily, last seen aged seven on a family beach holiday. Consumed by the notion that she could be his soul mate, Fox tells his story of his quest to find her (aided by his trusty sidekick, Stefan) and speculates on how his life might have turned out with Emily.

The show is a mixture of stand-up and storytelling with some video thrown in. It has a cosy feel, not just because of the small (but noisy) venue but because Fox comes across like a mate you'd meet up with for a beer after work. His quest, which should seem a bit creepy, is instead sweet and nostalgic. Some of the best jokes, however, come out of more tangential moments where Fox diverts from the story and into stand-up.

I saw the preview show with Fox in warm-up mode. It was a bit shambolic—volume control was an issue, the timing was off with some of the projections, and Fox had an assistant to prod him through the script.

Rather than detract from the experience, these stumbles highlighted Fox's skill as a performer, turning the problems

to his comedic advantage. The show never lagged, and the techie's employment of a red laser pointer, which she shined in Fox's eyes whenever he strayed too far from the narrative, was hilarious. He may seem like an average guy, but he's got a big talent. One to watch. 🐿



The Guinness Great Debate: Ignorance Is Bliss

Rachael Howlett

What would Melbourne International Comedy Festival be without the *Great Debate*—two hours of cerebral musings, comedic posturing and verbal stoushs between some of the festival's local and international acts?

This year, the topic 'Ignorance Is Bliss' remained under wraps until the audience filed into Melbourne Town Hall.



GRANT ONLY
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BUT THAT'S
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TENUOUS
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UNCONVINCINGLY
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Moderated by Fitzroy's own Corinne Grant, the affirmative team was Paul McDermott (captain), Fiona O'Loughlin and Jason Byrne, and the negative team was headed by Stephen K Amos with Claire Hooper and Greg Fleet.

Grant only just managed to reel in the speakers and keep them on time, although not on topic. But that's what the *Great Debate* is all about—tenuous comedic threads unconvincingly linked to a single subject. It's just the route used that varies.

McDermott and Amos took the philosophical path to argue that ignorance is bliss; whereas, O'Loughlin and Hooper followed on with the personal. O'Loughlin's tale of blissful ignorance when flying business class demonstrated her point, while Hooper successfully argued it's trips to the toilet that are bliss, not ignorance.

The *Great Debate* is billed as 'famous funny people grand-standing,' which is a completely accurate account of the proceedings. From Byrne setting up a flying ironing board, Fleet ending his spiel with two sock puppets belting out The Pogues's 'Fairytale in New York' and McDermott calling members of the audience on stage to join him sing about cocks, the *Great Debate* is very rarely about the debate topic but always about showing off. 🐿



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Hooray For Everything

Accept the Taxi Drivers

Amanda Muzslai

In an intimate setting, the comedic musical styling of Hooray For Everything really hit the mark. Their show *Accept the Taxi Drivers* delivers an enthralling set of satirical songs in three-part harmony.

Matt, Phil and Stevie D all have excellent voices in their own right, but their harmonising adds another element to the songs, almost to the point where the audience forgets that they're listening to comedy. That is, until they're met with yet another series of witty punchlines.

The performers work very well together, even if their timing isn't always spot-on. That somehow added to the fun of the show. The lads kept the mood light-hearted and fun, building up an excellent rapport with the audience.

Hooray For Everything focussed many of their songs on political issues such as the environment, terrorism and global warming, but at the same time put their own unique twist on them. Their tune outlining how 'fat kids' could help global warming was a good example of this. Away from politics, the 'Biscuit Song' was a standout with a very clever play on words.

The balance between the political and non-political makes *Accept the Taxi Drivers* a show that I would recommend to all audiences. Those who follow politics, but can also have a laugh about it, will enjoy the show. Alternatively, those who don't like politics will have a great time learning from Hooray For Everything's warped take on it all. 🐔



I FOUND THE EVENING HIGHLY ENTERTAINING, BUT TRIPOD HAVE DELIVERED FAR FUNNIER AND MORE QUICK-WITTED PERFORMANCES THAN HOW TO TRAIN AN ATTACK DOG FROM SCRATCH

How to Train an Attack Dog

from Scratch

Nicholas Edwards

Tripod never fail to please in my book, and this show was no exception. They have stumbled across some money for props, and the results are quite clever. Multimedia presentations, costume changes and extra members in the finale have all been enlisted. Tripod use these devices to take us on a journey of musical comedy, a history of the funny song.

There is no denying that they are funny guys, but there were moments when comedy took a backseat to the props, videos and heavily scripted conversation.

Spontaneous moments were few and far between during the performance, leaving their comic virtues truly untapped. I found the evening highly entertaining, but Tripod have delivered far funnier and more quick-witted performances than *How to Train an Attack Dog* from Scratch.

The songs were fantastically performed with a real flair for each musical genre covered, but there were very few funny lines.

By the end of the show, I came out knowing very little about training attack dogs but a whole lot more about musical comedy, with the emphasis quite heavily placed on music rather than comedy. 🐔



Insert Name Here: The Prequel Sequel

Kate Nicholson

Here at the festival for the second time around, *Insert Name Here: The Prequel Sequel* runs like a mini-film festival. What makes this unique is that all films submitted are shown—no matter what the quality. This idea stemmed from the organiser's exasperation (being a film-maker himself) at repeated rejections from film festivals.



There was the usual stand-up fill-in during set up. This time it was Jono KT, also performing in the festival and a newbie to the Melbourne comedy scene. His jokes were routine but very entertaining.

About eight international and Australian films were screened in over an hour with two breaks in between. Films were a mixed bag, from drama to animation and horror. As each night is different, there is an emphasis on mixing-it-up so the variety will be sure to please everyone. Many films were parodies of already existing mediums, so expect more laughs than tears.

Highlights included Caroline Duffy, an Australian mockumentary about a pantomime actress nearing the end of her career, and a hilarious animation, by director Michael Connell (also Australian), based on two video game characters dealing with a visit from the boss.

A bonus, as an audience member, is that you get to vote for the night's top film. All top films will be screened on the last evening of the festival, with the overall winner receiving the Golden Zombie Award. If you can't make it to any other night, try for the last.

Oh, and the free popcorn was great. 🐔

Jackie Loeb Things I can't talk about

Pat McGrath

As the name of her show suggests, Jackie Loeb is sick of being told what she can and can't say to an audience. *Things I Can't Talk About* is based loosed around a series of anecdotes describing the many times Loeb has been instructed by television producers, theatre managers and festival organisers to shy away from the taboo. And of course, she has invariably opted to do just the opposite.

In the course of her hour show, Loeb covers pretty much everything she isn't supposed to joke about, and we're not supposed to laugh at. From racism, sexism and homophobia, to RU486 (and her wish that it had been available to Tony Abbott's mother), the Cronulla riots, and of course, recycled water, Loeb's ironic bigotry verges on a pedagogy of the unmentionable.

It is an exercise in political incorrectness that isn't really



politically incorrect, and derision that isn't really hateful. The things she can't talk about are delivered with a healthy dose of jest.

Loeb is a relaxed performer with superb comic timing, and like a comedic herds woman, she tells us when to clap, where to look, and when we have laughed too little or too much. She accuses audience members of writing her most offensive material, being too young, too good looking and too innumerable.

Her scantily-clad rendition of Shakira's 'Whenever, Wherever' and impersonations of Cher, Tracy Chapman and Macy Gray are dated, which may indicate this isn't the first year they have appeared. 🐾

LET'S JUST GET
IT OUT THERE—
JOSH EARL IS
A DREAMBOAT,
ALBEIT A DORKY
AND SLIGHTLY
DISHEVELED
ONE, WITH THE
KIND OF SELF-
DEPRECATION
WITH THAT
WINS OVER THE
HEARTS (AND
OVARIES) OF
THE NORTHSIDE
LAYDEEZ

Jimmy James Eaton's Sausage Sizzle

Ewan Gordon

I arrived at this show with no knowledge of the performer, or any of his previous works. I decided to let the show speak



for itself. And it does in volumes. *Jimmy James Eaton's Sausage Sizzle* is similar to what I think a trip into people's minds would really be like. A little bit quirky, a little bit zany, highly unpredictable, hilariously funny, and a little bit scary; all mixed up with the occasional song.

Mixing pre-recorded visual and audio comedy with his live show, Eaton shows a large amount of faith in the gods of technology, along with his rather impressive comedic timing.

I do have a word of warning for those intending to see the show. Sausage Sizzle is merely the title of the show, not a description of what will happen. I'm saying this so that other people don't make the same mistake that I did. But even though there was no food, Sausage Sizzle easily filled my quota for comedy in one sitting.

Eaton has travelled from Perth for this year's festival, bringing with him tales about his life, and hopefully a lot of made up stories. Otherwise, I would hate to see his therapist bills. This show has a rawness that simply proves that without a doubt, Eaton is not only a damn fine comedian, but also someone to keep an eye out for in the future. 🐾

Josh Earl is a Librarian

Jessica Friedmann

So Josh Earl walks into a room and fifty indie word-nerd comedy fans begin to ovulate simultaneously. Let's just get it out there—Josh Earl is a dreamboat, albeit a dorky and slightly disheveled one, with the kind of self-deprecation with that wins over the hearts (and ovaries) of the Northside laydeez.

And he knows it. Here's a man who clearly understands where his audience's sympathies lie, and is not above exploiting them for all they're worth.

Onstage, Earl channels a certain brand of carefully cultivated brain-box chic, compelling the audience to identify with him as he checks the boxes so beloved of pseudo-hipsters everywhere: self-consciously incongruous hip-hopisms; nit-picketry; making fun of indie kids and emos; dance-off gang wars; giving unicorns cancer.

But while Earl's shtick could easily feel contrived—with the ground he covers so blatantly calculated towards winning over the indie kids—his performance is full of confidence and charm. This guy is earnest, and more than that, he's funny. The show's comedy-by-call-numbers staging is cute, as are the various non-sequiturs, but it's the musical interludes that reveal just how likable and talented Earl really

is. The wry lyrics and fumbling chord progressions are catchy and endearing, with the rousing 'Melvil Dewey, Motherfucker' sure to become an anthem for Semitic librarians everywhere.

Come to think of it, the world would be a better place if all librarians were like Josh. Go support his show, and help make this dream a reality. 🐾



CATEGORY	TITLE	VENUE	ALL START TIMES	4TH	5TH	6TH	7TH	8TH	9TH	10TH	11TH	12TH	13TH	14TH	15TH	16TH	17TH	18TH	19TH	20TH	21ST	22ND	23RD	24TH	25TH	26TH	27TH	28TH	29TH
Stand-Up	Dan Willis - Ferris Bueller's Way of...	Elephant and Wheelbarrow - CITY	8:30pm	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Stand-Up	Daniel Kison - It's the Fireworks Talking	Athenaeum Theatre	Mon 8.30pm, Tue - Thu 10.30pm, Sun 9.30pm	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Stand-Up	* Daniel Moore - Something Better	Hotel Discovery (formally Hotel Bakpak) - Velvet	8:00pm	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Stand-Up	Daniel Townes	Portland Hotel - Locker Room and Melb Town Hall	Tue - Sat 10.15pm, Sun 9.15pm, Mon 7.15pm	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Stand-Up	Danny Bhoy	Melb Town Hall - Main Hall	Tue - Sat 7pm, Sun 22 8.15pm, Sun 29 5pm	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Stand-Up	Danny McGinlay - Star Spangled Bender	Stork Hotel	7:30pm	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Stand-Up	Darren Casey - Poo Ring Sting	Elephant and Wheelbarrow - CITY	8:00pm	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Stand-Up	* Dave Bloustein - Beastly	The Imperial Hotel	7:15pm	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Stand-Up	Dave Bushell - Dirt, War... & Why I Don't Eat the Fishies	fortyfive downstairs	Tue - Sat 9.45pm, Sun 7.30pm	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Stand-Up	* Dave Callan in Dance of the Flame Retardant Monkey	Melb Town Hall - Council Chambers	9:30pm	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Stand-Up	Dave County - Have a Laugh	Elephant and Wheelbarrow - CITY and Elephant and Dingley International Hotel	7:30pm in CITY (except Thu 26 Apr 9:00pm in ST KILDA)	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Stand-Up	Dave Grant - Mid Life Crisis!	Athenaeum Theatre	8:30pm	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Stand-Up	Dave Hughes - Hughesy Goes Bananas	Hotel Discovery (formally Hotel Bakpak) - Velvet	7:00pm	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Stand-Up	Dave Jory is Polished	Trades Hall - The Meeting Room	10:30pm	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Stand-Up	* Dave Thornton - Euromission	Hi-Fi Bar & Ballroom	9:15pm	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Stand-Up	* David O'Doherty - is my name	Hi-Fi Bar & Ballroom	9:30pm	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Stand-Up	David Quirk - I Don't Wanna Tell Jokes	Erwin Rado Theatre	8:30pm	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Stand-Up	Dead Baron, The	Trades Hall - The Evatt Room	11:30pm	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Stand-Up	Deadly Funny Grand Final	Melb Town Hall - Lower Town Hall	5:00pm	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Theatre	* Debutante Diaries, The	Victoria Hotel - Acacia Room	9:30pm	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Theatre	* Delusionists, The - Comedy with No Illusions	Kaleide RMIT Union Theatre	9:30pm	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Stand-Up	* Department of Humour Services, The	The Comedy House at Fad Gallery	7:30pm	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Cabaret	* Die Roten Punkte	Bosco Theatre	8:30pm	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Special Events	Dissecting the Frog: Comedy Appreciation Course	Melbourne Town Hall Precinct	6:00pm	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Cabaret	Dolly Goes Down on the Farm	Melbourne University - Union Theatre	8:00pm	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Stand-Up	* Dolores! Dolores!	Hotel Discovery (formally Hotel Bakpak) - Theatre	8:15pm	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Stand-Up	Drew Rokos - What's All The Drew-Ha-Ha?	Felix Lounge	8:30pm	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Stand-Up	Dylan Moran	Melb Town Hall - Main Hall and The Arts Centre,	7:00pm at Town Hall (except Fri 13 6pm & 9pm Hammer Hall)	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Stand-Up	* Ed Byrne - Standing Up & Falling Down	RMIT Capitol Theatre	7:00pm	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Stand-Up	* Edinburgh Festa Besta: Starring Craig Hill	Comedy Club	8:30pm	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Stand-Up	* ElbowSkin - Sparring Partners	The Imperial Hotel	8:30pm	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Kid's Comedy	Eskimo Jokes	Umbrella Revolution	4:00pm	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Stand-Up	* Evan Jones - Extravagarza Pandemonium and Comic Spectacular	The Comedy House at Fad Gallery	9:45pm	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Theatre	Fast-Track Flirting	CAE	12:45 pm	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Theatre	Faulty Towers the Dining Experience	Hi-Fi Bar & Ballroom	7:00pm	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Special Events	* Festival Club, The	Portland Hotel - Locker Room	11:15 pm	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Stand-Up	* Fiona McGary in Giggles and Puddles	Melb Town Hall - Supper Room	7:00pm	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Stand-Up	* Fiona O'Loughlin	Melb Town Hall - The Evatt Room	8:30pm	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Stand-Up	* Fiona Scott-Norman - The Needle and the Damage Done	Trades Hall - The Evatt Room	9:00pm	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Theatre	First Step on a Tram is Hell, The	La Mama	Wed, Fri & Sun 6.30pm, Thu & Sat 8.30pm	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Stand-Up	Fox K is... Looking for Emily	Miszy	8:00pm	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Theatre	Friday the 13th: Domestic Nightmare	Trades Hall - The Quilt Room	11:45 pm	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Special Events	Funny Tonne, The	Hi-Fi Bar & Ballroom	11:15pm	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Stand-Up	Gabriel Rossi - The Taranella Feller	Melb Town Hall - Powder Room	9:45pm	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Special Events	Gala, The	Regent Theatre	7:30pm	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Stand-Up	Gary Bradbury - Cairo or Bust	Elephant and Wheelbarrow - CITY	7:30pm	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Stand-Up	Gavin Baskerville is Happy	Three Degrees	8:45pm	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Stand-Up	Georgia Van C in News from the Father Country	F4	9:00pm	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Stand-Up	* Geraldine Hickey - Truckee's Daughter	Portland Hotel - Locker Room	8:00pm	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Cabaret	* Geraldine Quinn - SEXDEATHBOWIE	Cookie	10:00pm	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Stand-Up	* Gerard McCulloch	Victoria Hotel - Acacia Room	8:15pm	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Theatre	* Glass Boat, The	Trades Hall - The Evatt Room	7:45pm	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Stand-Up	Going Halves!	Hotel Discovery (formally Hotel Bakpak) - Velvet	7:00pm	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Stand-Up	Grab the 86 to 303!	303	8:30pm	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Stand-Up	Great Golden Showers	The Amber Lounge	Tue & Fri 8.30pm, Sat 7pm	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Stand-Up	* Greg Fleet with Mick Moriarty in Fleetwood Mick	Swiss Club	9:45pm	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Stand-Up	* GUINNESS Comedy Zone, The	Hi-Fi Bar Mezzanine	8:00pm	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Special Events	GUINNESS Great Debate, The	Melb Town Hall - Main Hall	5:00pm	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Stand-Up	Hard Rock Comedy Café Wants You	Hard Rock Café	10:30pm	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Stand-Up	* Harley Breen in The Kingswood and I	Melb Town Hall - Backstage Room																											

CATEGORY	TITLE	VENUE	ALL START TIMES	4TH	5TH	6TH	7TH	8TH	9TH	10TH	11TH	12TH	13TH	14TH	15TH	16TH	17TH	18TH	19TH	20TH	21ST	22ND	23RD	24TH	25TH	26TH	27TH	28TH	29TH
Cabaret	* Introducing Beau Heartbreaker	Melb Town Hall - Wcc Room	7:00pm														*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Stand-Up	* Jackie Loeb in Things I Can't Talk About	Trades Hall - The Meeting Room	6:45pm	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Stand-Up	* Jason Byrne - Sheep for Feet and Rams for Hands	Melb Town Hall - Lower Town Hall	9:45pm										*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Special Events	Jeez Louise Funny Women's Forum	Melb Town Hall - Main Hall	10:00am										*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Stand-Up	* Jeff Green - Personal	Melb Town Hall - Lower Town Hall	7:15pm							*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Theatre	* Jeremie Bracka - Enough About Me... Let's Talk About Jew!	Theatreworks	8:00pm							*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Theatre	Jim Henson Company's, The PUPPET UPI:UNCENSORED	Princess Theatre	Tue-Sat 7.30pm, Sun 6.30pm, Matinees 7, 8 & 14 April 3.00pm	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Stand-Up	* Jimcoiin - Nice Touch!	Atheneum Theatre	8:45pm	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Stand-Up	Jimmy James Eaton's Sausage Sizzle	Northcote Town Hall	9:15pm							*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Stand-Up	Joel Ozborn - One Night Stand-Up	Melb Town Hall - Powder Room	7:15pm							*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Stand-Up	Johnny Kars Unleashed	Blue Fin Cafe	9:00pm							*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Stand-Up	* Josh Earl is a Librarian	Trades Hall - Old Council Chambers	9:30pm			*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Stand-Up	* Josh Thomas - Please Like Me	Melb Town Hall - Lunch Room	9:30pm			*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Stand-Up	* Josie Long - Kindness and Exuberance	Melb Town Hall - Powder Room	9:45pm			*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Stand-Up	Justin D Lodge - Life, Death and Komodo Dragons	Hotel Discovery (formally Hotel Bakpak) - Velvet	9:00pm			*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Stand-Up	* Justin Hamilton in Three Colours Hammo 1: Melbourne	Melb Town Hall - Council Chambers	9:00pm	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Stand-Up	* Justin Hamilton in Three Colours Hammo 2: Laugh and Death	Melb Town Hall - Council Chambers	8:15pm			*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Stand-Up	Justin Hamilton in Three Colours Hammo 3: Hamilton and His Sisters	Melb Town Hall - Council Chambers and Melb Town	Tue & Sun 7:15pm, Wed - Sat 8:15pm														*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Stand-Up	* Justin Kennedy - Ladies...?	Portland Hotel - Locker Room	9:10pm							*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Theatre	Keating!	Comedy Theatre	Tue - Sat 8pm, Sun 5pm, Sat Matinees 2pm, Wed 25 April 1pm							*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Stand-Up	* Kent Valentine - What Would Batman Do?	Portland Hotel - Portland Room	8:15pm			*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Stand-Up	Kieran Butler Claims Collingwood Ruined My Life... Again!	Carringbush Hotel	Wed - Sun 9.30pm (except 13 April 11pm)	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Stand-Up	* Kim Hope - Rollercoaster	Portland Hotel - Portland Room	7:00pm			*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Cabaret	* Kim Smith's Jungle Parade	Trades Hall - Old Council Chambers	10:45pm														*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Stand-Up	Kiss Chassey	Loop Bar	Wed & Thu 7.30pm, Sat 6.30pm	*						*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Stand-Up	Lance Petrie in Travelling at the Speed of Darkness	Tote Hotel	Thu - Sat 9pm, Sun 8pm, Extra Midnight Shows 20 & 21 Apr			*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Theatre	Late Nite Impro	Melb Town Hall - Cloak Room	11:00pm			*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Music	Laughapoolooza 2007: Comedy is the New Rock 'n' Roll	Umbrella Revolution	11:00pm			*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Stand-Up	* Lawrence Leung Learns to Breakdance	Trades Hall - The Quilt Room	9:15pm			*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Stand-Up	* Lawrence Mooney in Where To?	CAE Scene Room	9:45pm	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Stand-Up	Legal Comedy Debate - Rude & Crude: Do Lawyers Need to Go There?	Atheneum Theatre	6:30pm							*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Stand-Up	Life of Bryan II - Lessons in Life	State Library - Village Roadshow Theatre	8:30pm							*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Stand-Up	Local Laughs @ Laundry	Laundry Bar	8:30pm						*				*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Theatre	Lorin Clarke's For We are Young and Free	fortyfivedownstairs	7:00pm	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Theatre	Lou Pandi in A Brief History of the Stapler... and Other Office Tools	The Purple Emerald Lounge	7:00pm	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Stand-Up	LoveLife	F4	6:00pm			*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Stand-Up	Man and his Midget, A	Retro Cafe	8:00pm										*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Stand-Up	Mark Butler - It's Not Big, It's Not Clever	Loop Bar	Mon - Thu 9pm, Sun 7pm					*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Stand-Up	* Mark Watson - I'm Worried that I'm Starting to Hate Almost Everyone in the World	Hi-Fi Bar & Ballroom	8:00pm			*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Stand-Up	Matty Lappan - Cunnamulla	Elephant and Wheelbarrow - CITY	7:00pm	*			*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Stand-Up	Matt Elsbury - meaning...?	Pony	7:30pm	*		*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Theatre	Mayhem in Milan	Rust Cocktail Lounge	8:00pm										*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Theatre	Men of Steel	Bosco Theatre	Tue - Sat 7pm, Sun 6pm, Mats 10, 12 & 14 2pm							*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Theatre	Men of Steel on Holiday	Bosco Theatre	Tue - Sat 7pm, Sun 6pm, Mats 5 - 8, 11, 13, 21 & 28 2pm			*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Stand-Up	Merrick & Rosso - The Unprofessionals	Melb Town Hall - Main Hall	8:45pm										*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Stand-Up	Meshel Laurie - A Shadow of My Former Self	Melb Town Hall - Cloak Room	Tue - Sat 7.15pm, Sun 5pm	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Stand-Up	* Michael Chamberlin - Buddha & Blucy & Me	Alley Bar	9:45pm			*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Stand-Up	Michael Connell in Classic	Victoria University	8:00pm	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Stand-Up	* Mickey D - Shame 101	Victoria Hotel - Vic's Bar	8:15pm	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Music	Midnight Lullabies for the Angkor Orphanage	Umbrella Revolution	4:00pm							*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Cabaret	Midnight Trade	Trades Hall - Bella Union Bar	Thu, Fri & Sat 11.30pm, Tue & Wed 11pm, Sun 10pm, Mon 16	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Theatre	* Miss Rochelle's School for Very Naughty Girls	Trades Hall - The Meeting Room	9:15pm	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Stand-Up	Mon's Connedy Cooker	Melbourne City Square	6:00pm			*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Stand-Up	Monday Night for Comic Relief	Vibe Bar	7:30pm														*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Stand-Up	Monty Franklin - Monty McFly	Elephant and Wheelbarrow - ST KILDA and Elephant	Sun ST KILDA 5pm, Mon CITY 6.30pm					*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Kid's Comedy	Mr Bleak and the Eryop	Gasworks Arts Park - Theatre	11:00am				*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Stand-Up	Music, Mirth & Mayhem 9	Hi-Fi Bar & Ballroom	8:00pm							*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Stand-Up	MW OH Show's Quarter Life Crisis, The	F4	8:00pm	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Stand-Up	Nick Stevens and Friends	Drifters Alibi	Tue & Thu 8pm, Wed 9pm							*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Stand-Up	Nik Coppin - Redblak	Elephant and Wheelbarrow - CITY	9:40pm	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Stand-Up	Oliver Clark...By Request Only!	Three Degrees	7:30pm			*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Theatre	Once Upon a Coffee Cup...	Trades Hall - The Evatt Room	6:30pm										*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Theatre	One Man Stewards	Forum Theatre - Downstairs	7:00pm	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Cabaret	One Way Ticket to Nowhere	The Paris Cat	11 - 13 April 7.30pm, 14 April 2pm & 7.30pm				*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Cabaret	Opera Burlesque, The	Atheneum Theatre II	9:00pm					*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Stand-Up	Parental as Anything: starring Carolyn Chillum, Bev Killick, Wendy Little & Mick	Trades Hall - Old Council Chambers	21 & 22 April 4.45pm, 24 - 28 April 7pm, 29 April 6pm												*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Theatre	* Pastor Michael's Second Coming (& His Wife Comes Too)	Trades Hall - The Quilt Room	8:00pm	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Stand-Up	* Peter Berner in BernerLand	Victoria Hotel - Banquet Room	7:15pm			*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Music	Peter Brockdehurst	Trades Hall - New Council Chambers	4:30pm				*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Stand-Up	Peter Heliar - Hellraiser	Forum Theatre - Upstairs	9:15pm					*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Stand-Up	* Phil Nichol - The Naked Racist	Victoria Hotel - Banquet Room	8:30pm			*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Theatre	* Piglet: A Tragikomedy in One Act... or	Northcote Town Hall	9:00pm					*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*

Josh Thomas *Please Like Me*

Alex Murray

Never trust anyone who enjoyed high school. In his grown-up festival show, brutal honesty is the name of the game for Josh Thomas, who mines his relationships with his parents, the school bully, the girl who sort of touched him while they were naked, and his testicles.

Winner of last year's Raw Comedy competition, Thomas is an interesting new voice in Australian comedy. At nineteen years of age, he is a surprising discovery for a couple of reasons: firstly, for someone so new to the scene he has developed an interesting and distinct voice; and secondly, he has a very entertaining hour of material (Five minutes is the average length of a Raw Comedy performance.).

Personally, I try not to engage in conversations with anyone under the age of twenty-five because of the pain it causes my eyeballs when I have to roll them and sigh mid-way through every sentence. So allowing a teenager to talk at me for an evening didn't really seem like the best plan. However, very quickly into his set, my fears, as they say, were allayed.

Despite dealing with immature and personal themes, Thomas immediately engaged and

maintained the pace and standard of material throughout his performance. The show, entitled *Please Like Me*, is pretty much an hour-long self-deprecating tour de force.

Thomas is so disarming and so self-deprecating that you barely notice that he mercilessly mocks everyone he mentions. ♡



Justin Hamilton in *Three Colours Hammo 1: Melbourne*

Matt Heath

Justin Hamilton embarks on an ambitious show, *Three Colours Hammo 1: Melbourne*, which will see him perform three differently themed shows during Melbourne's comedy festival. Justin won the 2007 Brian McCarthy Moosehead award.

The first show in the trilogy reminds me of drinking a good

latte at a Brunswick Street café. The comedy, like a latte, takes a little while to arrive. But when it does, the first bits excite the palette. Then the warmth hits you, and you feel energised. As you down the rest of the brew, you are fulfilled and complete.

Hammo's delivery is unique. He crafts a heartwarming funny show about moving to Melbourne and falling in love. He draws you in as he acts out conversations with friends, himself, past girlfriends and acquaintances.

Sometimes, you forget it's a show told by Justin Hamilton—because he becomes a third person in the story, and just when you're lost in laughter, Hammo the master storyteller emerges with a majestic penis joke to remind you he is still there.

Performing in just his second night of the festival, Justin had already hit his stride perfectly. He was engaging, warm, honest, and very, very funny. Before I saw his show, I thought it would be too ambitious to be do a trilogy, but I was wrong. It's a walk in the park for a comedian as talented as Justin Hamilton. ♡



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Keating!

Richard Watts

God bless you, Casey Bennetto, not only for setting me up with comp tickets for the latest incarnation of your show at very short notice after I ran into you at Trades Hall on Friday night, but also for writing the bloody thing in the first place.

Keating! is a musical celebration of the all-too-brief era when Paul Keating was Australia's prime minister, when vision, not short-sightedness, was the political agenda of the day. Having won every award under the sun during its season at comedy festival two years ago, this marvellous show has since been redeveloped for Sydney's Belvoir Street Theatre by director Neil Armfield, and triumphantly returns to Melbourne.

Although I didn't see the original production (There goes my street cred!), I was lucky enough to see the dynamic, bare bones show on the opening night of last year's Fringe, and fuck it was good. I occasionally struggled to juxtapose that version with the slicker, razzle-dazzle version I saw on Saturday.



I walked out after the show thinking the original version was better. I've since refined that perspective: not better, just different. It's like comparing a film to the novel it's based on. They're different beasts.

From reggae to power ballads, this show has something for everyone—unless you happen to think John Howard is a morally upright leader with a well-developed social conscience, instead of a manipulative, socially divisive cunt who's happy to exploit national archetypes and myths for his own political agenda. 🐘

Kent Valentine

What would Batman do?

Miriam Reynoldson

This year, rookie comedian Kent Valentine answers the eternal questions: 'How can I live without you?', 'Should I stay or should I go?', and 'What shall we do with a drunken sailor?' The answer: roll him on his side so he doesn't vomit on himself.

Kent is as amiable as Adam Hills, as raw and energetic as

KENT IS AS
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WIL ANDERSON,
AND AS DORKY
AS A YOUNG
ROVE MCMANUS
BEFORE HIS
MOVE TO
CHANNEL 10



Wil Anderson, and as dorky as a young Rove McManus before his move to Channel 10. But he's not them—he's him.

Valentine has based his show around the guiding premise: what would Jesus do? However, being that Jesus had several water-related superpowers, Valentine decides that Jesus mightn't be the best example for an ordinary guy to follow. Instead, Valentine consults Batman, a self-made mortal god with 'really great branding'. From this, Valentine builds comic stories about his everyday life with the voice of Batman providing commentary and advice.

What emerges is a series of dialogues between Valentine, the characters in his stories, and the husky voice of Batman. Because he's a whiz with accents, his lightning-fast switches from character to character are absolutely cack worthy.

Valentine still hasn't shaken his penchant for pointing out his mistakes, an unfortunate side effect of having his act so thoroughly rehearsed. But all is forgiven because the stuff that does work is so damned good. I saw Kent last year. I saw him this year. And I'll definitely see him next year. 🐘

Kieran Butler claims Collingwood ruined his life, again!

Kim Hellard

According to Kieran Butler, the life of a Collingwood supporter is mired in tragedy. He claims Collingwood has ruined his life, yet again. As a fellow Collingwood tragedian, I couldn't agree more. Butler's stories of generational pathos, the artistry of heckling, the absurdities of South Australian fans and all those painful on-field memories, to me, rang oh-so-painfully and hilariously true.

Kicking off with an ode to our man Eddie, Butler smoothly weaves his way through tales of Collingwood's lost finals campaigns, 1990, marriage breakdown and how his paternal teachings lead his daughter to switch teams, twice.

The last ode of the evening was a brilliant song about Pies players who've defected—namely Chris Tarrant. Clever set ups made during the initial stages paid off throughout, a mark of a good storyteller.

Based in the heart of Collingwood territory, *Kieran Butler claims Collingwood ruined his life, again!* is staged in the intimate back room of the Carringbush Hotel, the Pies spiritual home.

With many moments of great humour, Butler performed to a packed, albeit very small, house. Although the audience was comprised of more Woodmen and women, fans from other clubs appreciated the raconteur's observations.

Not only should all Pies fans support Kieran Butler, but all football fans should pay at least one visit. And to those snoots who jump on the bandwagon at Grand Final time or turn their nose up at it throughout the season: see this show. You just might learn to appreciate what football is, does and means to a fan. 🐘



Kiss Chasey

Kim Edwards

There is nothing as nerve-wracking as trying out new comedy material on an audience for the first time. Successful comedy is such a reciprocal thing—audiences are so unpredictable and timing is everything.

Cameron Marshall’s stand-up show *Kiss Chasey* opened to a quiet reception, but there is certainly room to grow and develop this little tale of one man’s lengthy dating history. Marshall is undeniably pleasant and personable on stage, but his comic persona lacks clarity and individuality. The audience was unsure whether to laugh with him at his ‘exes’, or at him for his excesses. Indeed, the inclusion of some cute and funny multimedia interviews with the ladies in question added to this instability in comic focus.

Marshall seemed to be trying a bit of everything: some deadpan; some self-satirising; some minor racial/sexual shock value; and, some avuncular punning. Unfortunately, this leads to overall unevenness. The gentle personal narrative is not excessive and fictionalised enough to be laugh-out-loud funny or spontaneous and detailed enough to have

rhythm and style. There’s great potential in ‘X’ jokes and the premise of the show’s title, which simply didn’t go anywhere.

The strongest material was Marshall’s moments of improv: his jokes about the little tech issues, the patron who exited with the mobile phone, and the audience reception. Hopefully for subsequent performances, Marshall will be more comfortable with his material and his audience, and go with the charming spontaneity for which he obviously has flair. Rather than trying to re-inflate flat old puns. 🐘



Late Nite Impro

Nicholas Edwards

Thrown up on stage in front of a live audience, given no material and asked to be funny—sounds a bit daunting doesn’t it?

Well, the guys and girls from Late Night Impro thought it was a good idea and produced a show that has become a comedy festival favourite over the past eleven years.

The show starts with an idea shouted from the audience, and then we are treated to an evening of quick-witted and, at times, hilarious improvisation.

The cast use a number of dramatic games to help shape the evening and keep a consistent flow of new ideas and even crazier situations. Scenes are frozen and actors moved around and given

a new theme. The language is changed in the middle of sentences. Spontaneous songs are performed and character roles are swapped between actors at random points.

There are moments when the action lulls, but the beauty of this show is that the audience feels part of the creation process. You can forgive moments of indecisiveness when performers have to change to Finnish speaking bomb experts in the middle of a song about siamese twins for instance. Quite often, these moments are amusing in themselves.

The vulnerability of the performers and vigour with which they approach this night make it obvious why this show has become a comedy festival staple. 🐘



THE STRONGEST MATERIAL WAS MARSHALL’S MOMENTS OF IMPROV: HIS JOKES ABOUT THE LITTLE TECH ISSUES, THE PATRON WHO EXITED WITH THE MOBILE PHONE, AND THE AUDIENCE RECEPTION

Syn FM proudly supports The Pun in 2007

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Lawrence Leung Learns to Breakdance

Tom Arup



IT IS QUITE A
BRAVE SHOW,
SO RELIANT ON
THE AUDIENCE
ACTUALLY
LIKING LEUNG;
BUT THAT ISN'T
VERY HARD

Leung has really hit on something here. It's not that his topic is exceptionally revolutionary—most of the material is about Leung exploring what cool is—rather it is brilliantly executed.

He instills everything one wants from a creative exercise: a constant narrative, intelligent observations and a lot of himself. In fact, it is this personal element that lifts this above the usual comedy fest fare.

Leung's humour is generally nostalgic and tends towards the personal, emphasising stories of his childhood, girls he had crushes on and his jealousy of his brother Dennis's coolness. He pushes this with the use of multimedia, including two video segments that, although a little reminiscence of other stunt comedy, add to the overall ideas he wanted to get across in a most entertaining manner.

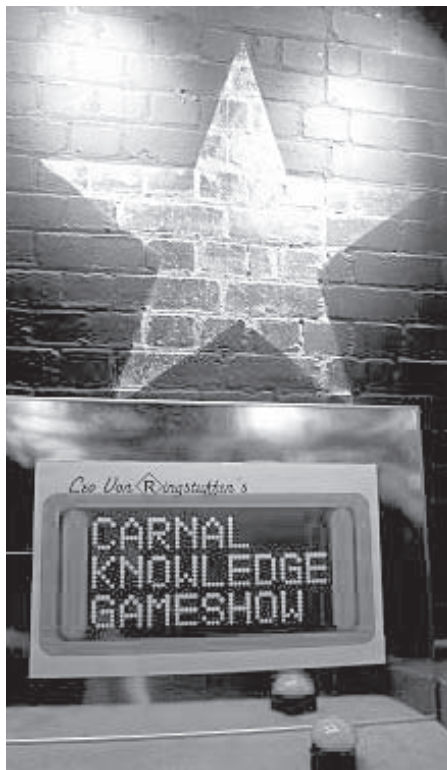
More than anything else, this show illustrates that the best comedy acts tend to have a consistent narrative, no matter how thin that might be. *Breakdance* builds on Leung's personal quest to find the essence of cool to a stunningly humorous finale, which is even tinged with a little emotional kick.

It is quite a brave show, so reliant on the audience actually liking Leung; but that isn't very hard. He is so personal in style, so enthusiastic, so prepared to give a little of himself, that you can't help but feel privileged to be there. 🍷

Leo Von Ringstuffen's Carnal Knowledge Game Show

Sabine Brix

Leo Von Ringstuffen is self-described as a sexual therapist with no formal qualifications, his routine taking the style of a quiz show. I am easily embarrassed and don't take well to audience interaction, factors I unwittingly surrendered when, unaware of its content, I chose this show due to the cool venue.



Von Ringstuffen, in hideous wig and floral ensemble, is not only a cross-dresser but also an eerie cross between Borat and Austin Powers. First asking whether his 'cock looked big in this', he paraded around cracking 'tits and ass' jokes, which encouraged either laughter or deafening silence depending on who you observed, the laughter more often coming from the gents.

A parody of Peter Allen's 'I still call Australia home', transformed into the witty 'My right hand still makes me moan', elicited laughs and was one of the only stand-up elements of the routine.

The majority of the show involved select audience members answering quiz questions about sex. (I breathed a sigh of relief upon arrival when made aware the questionnaires were voluntary and audience participation was not mandatory.) The quiz unfortunately lost the audience's attention mid-way, but they soon pepped up with the help of leggy burlesque dancers and a routine involving milk, which should not be repeated away from cereal or coffee.

Patrons interested in *Carnal Knowledge* should bring thinking caps, wry humour and a glass. Why should all that milk go to waste? 🍷

Mark Butler

It's Not Big, It's Not Clever

Kim Hellard

Mark Butler is the sort of bloke who you'd meet in a pub on a lazy Sunday arvo, strike up a conversation with, and watch in awe at the amount of information he spews. In his latest offering, he gives his audiences a guide to the most offensive words, according to surveys conducted in England and Australia. The man has done his homework.

Butler uses the audience in an entertaining way, choosing 15 participants to figure out what the 15 most offensive words are. Using rhyming cockney slang, stories from his life, history lessons and general observations, Butler gives us some very funny and not so subtle but clever clues as to what these words are, how they evolved, and why Aussies are so

good at swearing. Being English, Butler applauds the antipodean way we bastardise profanity and language in general.

It is always interesting to find out the historical context of our favourite swear words, especially the most offensive of them all—three guesses as to what that is, people. This word, according to Butler, was once used as a name of a street where prostitutes hung out. I thought Butler was taking the piss until I did some research and found out that it's actually true. Kudos to Mark Butler for an educational and entertaining look at the four letter word.

A warning: people who are really offended by the most offensive word in the world, brace yourself. He makes the audience sing it out loud! 🍷



The MW OH Show's Quarter Life Crisis

Brewster Hipik

The *MW OH Show's Quarter Life Crisis* is a mix of impersonations, black humour, self-deprecation, storytelling, improv and wrestling theatrics. Mark Williamson is the mind behind this massive blend of performance styles.

After 14 months of doing open-mic gigs at the Roxbury Hotel in New South Wales, Mark made his Melbourne Comedy Festival debut on a Wednesday to a small but interested crowd in an intimate, curtained-off room at Club Four.

The show had both hits and misses. Mark's smash hit in the show was his account of working in a call center during which he listed the outlandish ways he tried to get fired from his job. As he delivered his lines, I laughed out loud, both in disbelief and awe.

Other hits were his impersonations of established comedians. He invited audience suggestions and convincingly portrayed Billy Connolly, Richard Pryor and Jerry Seinfeld.

But when he entered the territory of crude puns and jokes, he did so unsuccessfully. Mark's nervousness about performing at the festival showed most when he spoke too fast at times and had to repeat lines. These jitters impeded

his performance and hampered the audience's enjoyment of the show.

Mark is a rough diamond, a talented raw comic who's still a bit jagged around the edges. With more stints at Club Four in the coming days, Mark is sure to polish his performance. With that, the show is likely to score more laughs. 🍌



One Man Starwars

Fifi Traxabelle L'Amore

There's a lot to be said for turning up to Charles Ross's *One Man Starwars* without any knowledge of just how he goes about squeezing all three of George Lucas's original films into a one-hour stage show. For those who want to turn up 'blind', you need to know nothing more than this: *One Man Star Wars* is unrelentingly brilliant and comes with the highest recommendation.

For those who want to know a touch more, Ross's performance is precisely what it says it is. Aside from a superb contribution by those responsible for the lighting, Ross presents *Star Wars (A New Hope)*, *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Return of the Jedi* entirely by himself, without costume changes, props or intermission. Indeed, perhaps the most impressive element of the show—more impressive even than the exceptional timing, hilarious attention to detail and willingness to gently make fun of the film's idiosyncrasies—is the sheer energy with which Ross performs. You'll leave not only marvelling at his wit and talent, but at his physical endurance—he stops only between episodes for a quick sip of water before beginning again with his super-charged, super-funny rendition.



Free from crudity and absolutely ideal for audiences of all ages, whether they're hard-core fans of the films or have only a vague familiarity with them, this is the sort of show that makes the comedy festival a pleasure to attend.

If you have a choice between eating and seeing Charles Ross, see Charles Ross. 🍌

YOU NEED TO
KNOW NOTHING
MORE THAN
THIS: ONE MAN
STAR WARS IS
UNRELENTINGLY
BRILLIANT AND
COMES WITH
THE HIGHEST
RECOMMENDATION



Dave Callan

**Dance of
the Flame
Retardant
Monkey**

**Melbourne
Town Hall**

**5-29th April
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**9.30pm
(8.30 pm Sundays)**

*'Much to laugh
about, lots to
think about...
those who find
it are so richly
rewarded they
can't wait
to tell their
friends'. (Rip it
up Magazine)*





THE JIM HENSON
COMPANY
DELIVERS A
SLICK SHOW
OF INSPIRED
PERFORMANCES
AND
UNEXPECTED
OUTCOMES

Pastor Michael’s Second Coming (& His Wife Comes Too)

Jim Bob



Anyone who has been up at 5am watching TV will be familiar with American evangelists. And unless you’re an (il)legitimate crusader, you might consider seeing the Bongo Bus production *Pastor Michael’s Second Coming (& His Wife Comes Too)*. Upon taking my seat, I realised the first problem with the show—leg room. Standing five-foot nothing, I’m rarely troubled by leg

room, but at Trades Hall I was. So if you’re tall, your knees will be massaging your Adam’s apple throughout the show. The next and major problem with the show became apparent soon after. How do you string together an hour long show that is based on a single premise—‘evangelists want your money’? One would suggest subtlety is best; however, the producers elected to use the sledgehammer approach. With Pastor Michael requesting tidings at every opportunity and messages from sponsors occurring every five minutes, the joke starts wearing thin. Other material brought laughs: hypocrisy and homosexuality in the church; the political influence of these groups and body image. Jokes dealing with the role of women in the church were received the best and Becky Mae steals the limelight as Pastor Michael’s wife. Unfortunately, she was not enough to save the show. The PowerPoint presentation was mildly humorous; although, at times, it was illegible to those of us not sitting in the front row. I think the Pastor is headed for hell for this one, and anyone who sees it will experience at least an hour of hell. 🙄

The Jim Henson Company’s *Puppet Up! Uncensored* Bels Hillard

If you’re after a tale about two New Zealand brothers with leprosy looking for love, or you want to see a Flemish weasel commentate World Weasel Bashing Championships live from Belgium, *Puppet Up!* is the show for you. The ingenious puppeteers show off their remarkable talent for not only performing, but also keeping a straight face when they’re trying to understand the audience suggestions or when everything goes completely pear-shaped. Watching skits of two girls looking for sausages in a gay bar in Kazakhstan, three evil optometrist rabbits giving laser eye surgery to an unsuspecting patient, and scenes from the latest Hollywood action movie *Stuff Blows Up*, the

audience never knew what was going to happen next. At some points, I’m not sure the cast did either, which only made the performances even more hilarious. Undoubtedly, the evening’s highlight was MC Possum and his cautionary rap fairytale ‘The Princess and the Hedonist’—complete with backup cavemen. Worthy of an encore and thoroughly deserving of the raucous cheers from the audience, MC Possum was responsible for the biggest laughs I’ve had this festival. The Jim Henson Company delivers a slick show of inspired performances and unexpected outcomes. Taking improv comedy to a new level, *Puppet Up!* is comedy gold. Here’s hoping they’re back next year. 🙄





Ramblings: Second Movement

Kate Nicholson

Ramblings: Second Movement is about an Aussie piano bar singer's exploration of Europe (oh, and an attempt at Singapore). She broke it off with her boyfriend and, without him even realising she was gone, left in search of her place in the big, wide world.

Although the portrayal of other cultures, including German, Scandinavian, Japanese and Moroccan, was fairly stereotypical, the audience welcomed such comparisons. Mark Wellington's portrayal of each character, as described by Kristilee Ransley through song and sketch, was convincing. Ransley showed off her tremendous singing skills.

The performance seemed over-rehearsed and tense at times. There were a few forgotten lines, but they were covered well with cleverly improvised humour.

Wellington's piss-take of a bad British comedian performing in an Aussie-themed bar in Dresden was brilliant, and the portrayal of a Scandinavian 'air bass' player was also very impressive, both in the retelling and the performance.

There were a few too many cheesy one-liners during a Casablanca sketch, such as an American tourist saying exactly

what you'd expect, 'Play it again...' And the rendition of the Titanic theme during the Scandinavian cruise scene was a little unpalatable.

Saying that, I think anyone who enjoys hearing travel anecdotes will be amused by *Ramblings: Second Movement*. Think of this show as a way to experience the world through the eyes of a piano playing singer without leaving the familiar confines of Trade Hall. 🍷



Sackful of Bullfrogs - Anthony Morgan

Richard Watts



No bullfrogs. No structure. Hell, the self-described 'washed up comedian' didn't even get to the point of the show until the last five minutes. By which time, it was far too late to explain why there was a fridge-sized cardboard box bearing the words 'OMINOUS BOX' on stage.

Despite being a rambling drunk, after ten awkward opening minutes, Morgan soon warmed up and proved himself a hilarious comic, fond of tangents and humour so biting he'd take your nipple off if he were licking your breast instead of asking the audience to remind him what point he'd just been making.

From satirising the US invasion of Iraq by suggesting we abandon the Arabic numerals

we use everyday (A joke I think went over the heads of at least half the audience, for whose edification I present the following: these—1,2,3,4,5 etc—are Arabic numerals, these—I,II,IV, XIX—are Latin numerals, and this is binary—011010—which equals 26.), discussing the provenance of the phrase 'innocent unless proven guilty' versus 'innocent until proven guilty,' to talking about his haircut, Morgan rambled, regaled and seemingly delighted the majority of his audience.

For the first minutes of his show, I was singularly unimpressed. Once he'd warmed up, there was not a doubt that Anthony Morgan still had that old magic. It was just a little diluted by the amount of alcohol in his veins. 🍷

Sam Simmons The Sex and Science of Boredom

Marcus Felicetti

There are some things the ordinary mind could never conceive. Things like a talking couch, bread-shoes, and feeding bird to the breads (That's not a typo.). But all that suggests is that Sam Simmons is no ordinary comic. His new show *The Sex and Science of Boredom* is 40% multimedia, 35% stand-up and 14% re-enactment of weird life experiences (Percentages may vary from show to show.).



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The genius of this show lies in its ability to present the banal in weird terms, like a pool maintenance video that is feeling under valued, or 'Family Feud' and its (in)ability to function as a point of connection between a man and a woman. It is a trip inside the head of a bald guy who is looking for love in strange ways while receiving in depth psychoanalysis from his sofa. Add to this a few moments of Pavarotti-style opera, and the result is an experiment in pushing the boundaries of the absurdist tradition, with unbounded energy and confidence. Favourite moments for me were the split seconds after a weird joke when he cringed as if to say, 'What the hell am I on about?'

It is a wild ride— but if you are looking for something different, look no further! 🍷

Science-ology

Brewster Hipik

Boldly step into a white square room that smells of plywood and prepare yourself for *Science-ology*, a one-hour journey fusing glam rock with science and turning labs assistants into roadies and scientists into rock gods. Sitting in a room jammed with people, where the person beside you is as a consequence now your new best friend, a lab coat clad Ben McKenzie immediately captures your attention with his surprising use of a matchstick, glass beaker, pinch of salt and an egg. From there, he launches into a tirade about the conspiracies surrounding TV commercials for meat starring Sam Neil, debunks the forensic methods used in CSI and enlightens his audience to the science babble used in ‘Star Trek’. Although the hard science Ben uses to set up the punchlines is both informative and intriguing, it can at times become tedious, causing the routine to fall into a lull until the next punchline kicks in.



However, Ben’s satire of science is subtle, intelligent and delightfully unpredictable; his use of PowerPoint is simple and originally funny. To top it off, he has an impeccable sense of timing, a witty self-effacing humor and a presence on stage that commands your attention. You don’t have to be a science buff to enjoy this show but if you are, you’ll enjoy it a whole lot more, possibly to the point where you’ll cackle like a kookaburra throughout most of the show as one lady did! 🐣

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Sean Hughes

Greg Burchall

When comics segue from rampant rants about sex, government and the press into ‘message’ terrain, the outcome can be as dire as an election-headed politician espousing family values. But Sean Hughes has a very important message: don’t go drunk to a charity auction. His main prop, seated on the chair at stage right, is sober



testimony to his latest life lesson. The London-born Irish comic has been missing from the stage for some years, gleaming laughs through TV, film and novel-writing. So it was a decidedly well-fed Hughes who declared it was ‘great to be back in Melbourne’ and riffed on eejit things in print, relationships and himself. The ‘adult’ Hughes, at 41, still has all the zest and cheek that won him the prestigious Perrier comedy award at 24—the youngest ever recipient—but the tone is darker and probably funnier. ‘I thought I’d be married with kids by now,’ he says. ‘Or at least be divorced with weekend access.’ Much of the material is about being older, no wiser, watching your parents shrink and dating 25-year-olds. Being a pet-owning singleton is not all joy: ‘I got so pissed off with myself last night, I slept in the spare room.’ He paces the stage, sips from a wine glass and shuffles through his print props. It’s good to have him back and enjoying himself in a smart and amusingly rambling encounter. Oh yeah. And there was one other message: don’t take ecstasy before a visit to the Holocaust Museum. 🐣

The Sound of Music Drag Show

Jane Watkins

Middle-aged men do weird things. Some buckle their belts too tight and others cheat on their wives. Many channel their repressed emotions into lusting after Scarlett Johansson. Less shocking and humorous is how a group of middle-aged men wearing women’s clothes recreated *The Sound of Music* for stage. This drag show wasn’t unfunny, just more wacky funny than ha-ha funny. I’ve seen *The Sound of Music*, and its awesomeness casts a shadow over my impressions of this production. I don’t know much about drag. Before the show, I’d never seen a man mime singing, or mime gouging another man’s butt-hole.

I found the performers playing up their gender-confused appearance made the energy and momentum ‘drag’. I’m not sure if this gender bending is meant to challenge, but it bores. When the performers forgot about the pink elephant between their legs, so did the audience, and the show became something special. Miss Jessica James’s subtle portrayal of Maria made this musical more than a freak show. She’s the only character who’s recognisably human, alienated from a crowd of deformed and menacing creatures.

At the nunnery where she starts out, Maria is scolded by heartless nuns who look something like the Gatekeeper from the video game Nightmare. As she tries to fit into the von Trapp family, Maria is sexually molested by the children and farted at by the Captain. It’s a definite spectacle. I can’t say I understood it. I liked the shiny costumes and the dance routines. They were pretty. 🐣



Stephen K Amos *More of Me*

Miriam Reynoldson

I was disappointed to find that I had gone to a sell-out comedy show, only to watch jokes I'd already seen performed on TV. Stephen K Amos has done some brilliant work—brilliant enough that I've got tapes of his routines from various comedy festivals, including his set for Melbourne International Comedy Festival's Great Debate in 2005, which I also saw live. The topic was 'Does God have a sense of humour?'

Unfortunately, this just means I have video proof that Amos's routine this year was peppered with stale material. His latest set contains a good handful of religion-themed jokes lifted from the 2005 debate.

I know that all comedians recycle stuff—sometimes a joke is too good not to repeat—but this is two years after the fact. I expect a little more effort from an A-list comedian like Amos. He is, after all, a great talent.

Several jokes from this year's set had me cackin' me pants, as he wove tales of his childhood with observations about race and culture and ruminations on religion. And, like a true seasoned performer, Amos knows how to interact with an audience.

When he brought up football, a man in the audience shouted out, 'Eagles!' Quick as a flash, Amos said, 'Penguins! What game are we playing?' Now that's skill. I'm an Amos fan. I always have been. I think he's a clever, snappy fellow. But he ought to avoid those live repeats. 🐧



Strangelove the Musical

Alethea Kinsela

Dark, humorous and weird, *Strangelove the Musical* is an adaptation of the 1964 classic film *Dr. Strangelove*. Tristan Coelho's music is a fantastic addition to the already bizarre story. Nuclear warfare presented through song is not something you see every day, but this show is definitely worth a look.

Jon Williams is superb as the maniacal Brigadier General Ripper who torments Group Captain Mandrake, played by Kip Williams. Think comedic versions of Kurt and Marlow stuck in a small room with a six-barrelled machine gun. The things Ripper gets up to with that gun will have you in stitches.

Oliver Wakelin plays the amorous General Turgidson, whose passion for nuclear warfare is pitted against pacifist President Muffley, played by Toby Truslove. Like Ripper and Mandrake, this pair is also stuck in a room. Instead of a machine gun to play with, they have a sexy Russian ambassador, another trigger-happy general, and the Stephen-Hawking-cross-Jim-Carey figure of Dr Strangelove.

The ticket master warns that the unpaid actors might steal patrons' alcohol — well, all I can say is there was enough vodka onstage to supply the entire audience.

Stand-up comedy acts are a dime a dozen, but a full cast of talented actors in a really affordable stage production is a rarity. *Strangelove the Musical* is without doubt one of the better acts at this year's festival. And you know a comedy show's going to be a winner when it's been given the thumbs-up from the cast of *The Chaser*. 🐧



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Tammy Anderson

Greg Burchall

You can tell by the show's title that this will not be subtle storytelling from one of Melbourne's most versatile and volatile actors.

Clacker is not the only c-word Tammy Anderson lets loose in this howlingly funny but often cringe-worthy tour of the body's private places and less popular functions.

Yes, there are fart jokes. And ones about childbirth, sex, anal infections and incontinence.

Just for starters.

Anderson already has a great reputation for honest and confronting writing and performance, particularly through her solo show *I Don't Wanna Play House*, which examined her Tasmanian, aboriginal and sexually-abused background.

It's grand to see her now take the stage and have fun: as loud and as lewd as she wants.

Her Dallas-like detailing of the streets where she grew up in Launceston in all its incestuous and internecine inter-tangling is worth the visit to the show alone.

As Anderson says: It's not just material—it's ammunition.



But this is a comically crude outing in which Anderson is tougher on herself—and on her body's inappropriate burps, blasts, farts, leaks and malfunctions—than she is on the wider world.

There are so many tales that relate to this girl's 'moom' that you almost expect it to be a co-performer but thankfully it kept silent.

The rapturous crowd went wild over Anderson's fart impressions—based on what you had for dinner the night before.

It's a powerhouse production from Ilbijerri under Kylie Belling's assured direction, and Tammy Anderson is a strong, brave, deadly performer. 🍷

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Trent McCarthy *Confessions of a Talkback Junkie*

Kim Hellard

The phrase 'self help' should be enough to make anyone run for the hills. Don't.

Trent McCarthy delivers his take on the twelve steps to recovery with a healthy dose of understated cheek. Dr. Phil devotees and the like, be warned. You may be offended—we can only hope.

Starting off with a short film, McCarthy establishes his story and struggle. We meet his fellow 12 steppers and their over zealous facilitator, a man who McCarthy points out is overcoming his own addiction for facilitating groups.

McCarthy uses his caring, sharing, highly therapised tone of voice, which beautifully and quite naturally takes the piss. McCarthy also utilises the 12th

step, called 'sharing your story,' as the show's launching pad. He delivers his tales of his foibles with a sense of self-pitying pathos that you couldn't help but laugh with, and at, which is the whole point.

Ending with a performance from a very lusty song and dance man (I'm not sure what the connection is between a self help seminar and a spot of cabaret.), he was outrageous and the audience loved it.

If there was a down side to this show, it was the laughing hyena at the back of the room. You know the type, the one with the really loud and annoying laugh. I just hope he wasn't one of McCarthy's friends. If that's the case, Trent, you don't need him. 🍷



Triple Trouble

Mitchell Diamond

Triple Trouble can be summed up in one word—excellent.

Combining the best aspects of stand-up, some fun musical numbers, and some on the spot improvisation, it delivered an amazing evening. As a long time fan of improvisation shows, I was deadset on seeing this one, and my eagerness was richly rewarded.

There is no real way to fully describe the sheer energy host Dan Walmsley has as he pranced about the stage, jokes coming thick and fast. The audience loved it.

Combining some great jokes from comedians like Duff, as well as some fun but shocking facts, it was a night of laughs. One of the great attractions of *Triple Trouble* was the Musical Odyssey—a musical journey of a theme chosen by the comedians and endorsed by the fans. An absolute delight.

The audience was presented with three themes for the Musical Odyssey, with the theme chosen according to how much applause was given. From pop artists taking over the world, to a boyfriend with an unfortunate fondness for his cacti collection, all the topics were great fun.

Triple Trouble is over 18's only. If you're in the mood for some laughs, and then some drinks, give it a go. 🍷





Wellington WHO

Matt Heath

I got a late phone call to see *Wellington WHO*, so I decided not to read any of the posters advertising the show and just check it out with no prior idea or expectations.

The first part of my mission late on a Saturday night was to navigate into the bowels of Trades Hall and enter through the doors of The Police Box into a slightly-larger-than-a-broom-closet like room.

After an epic sci-fi type introduction, the title *Wellington WHO* started to make sense. Craig Wellington declared his geek past and an obsession with the BBC television series 'Doctor Who'.

This Melbourne International Comedy Festival show is a comedy journey through Wellington's life and his 'Doctor Who' nerd world. I'm not a 'Doctor Who' fan in the slightest, and a lot of the material went over my head.

Numerous times, I was that one person you find in every comedy audience who wasn't laughing while everyone else was in hysterics. I just struggled a little bit because I really dislike 'Doctor Who'.

What I did laugh at was the comedy skill with which Wellington jumped in and out of different nerd characters during his story.

This is an absolute must see for any 'Doctor Who' fan or sci-fi buff, and judging from everyone else's laughs on the night, *Wellington WHO* was a winner. 🐔



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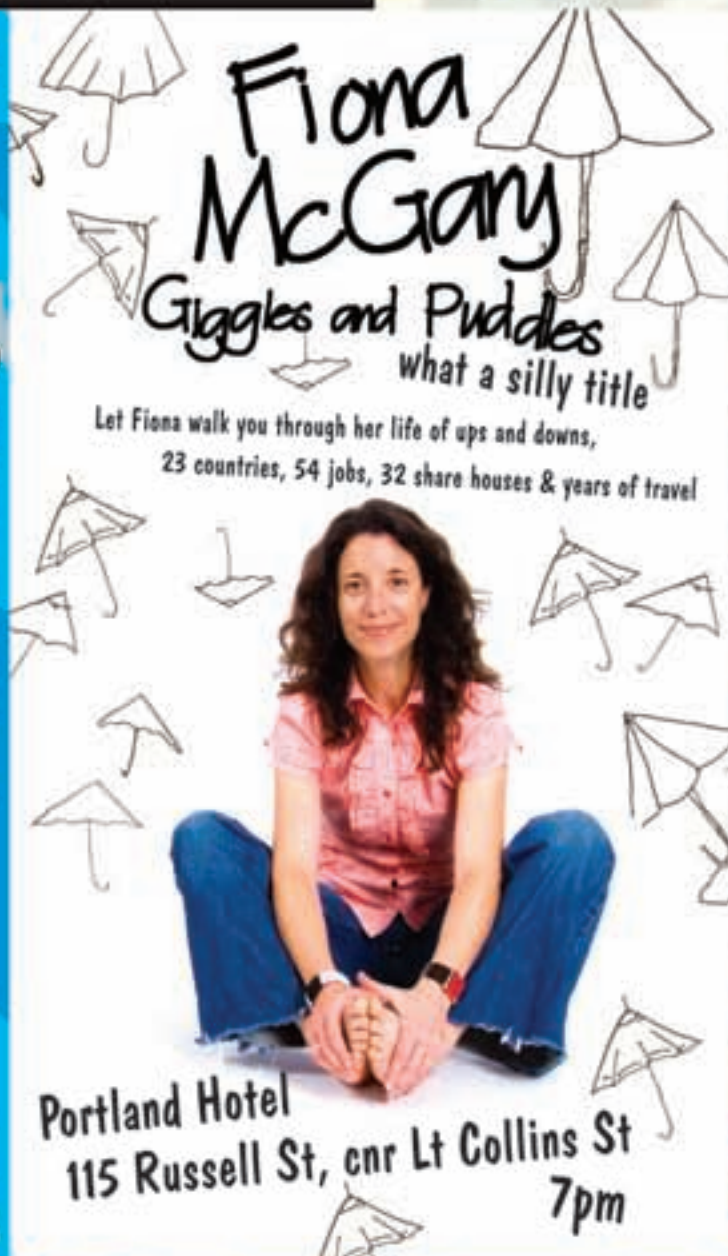
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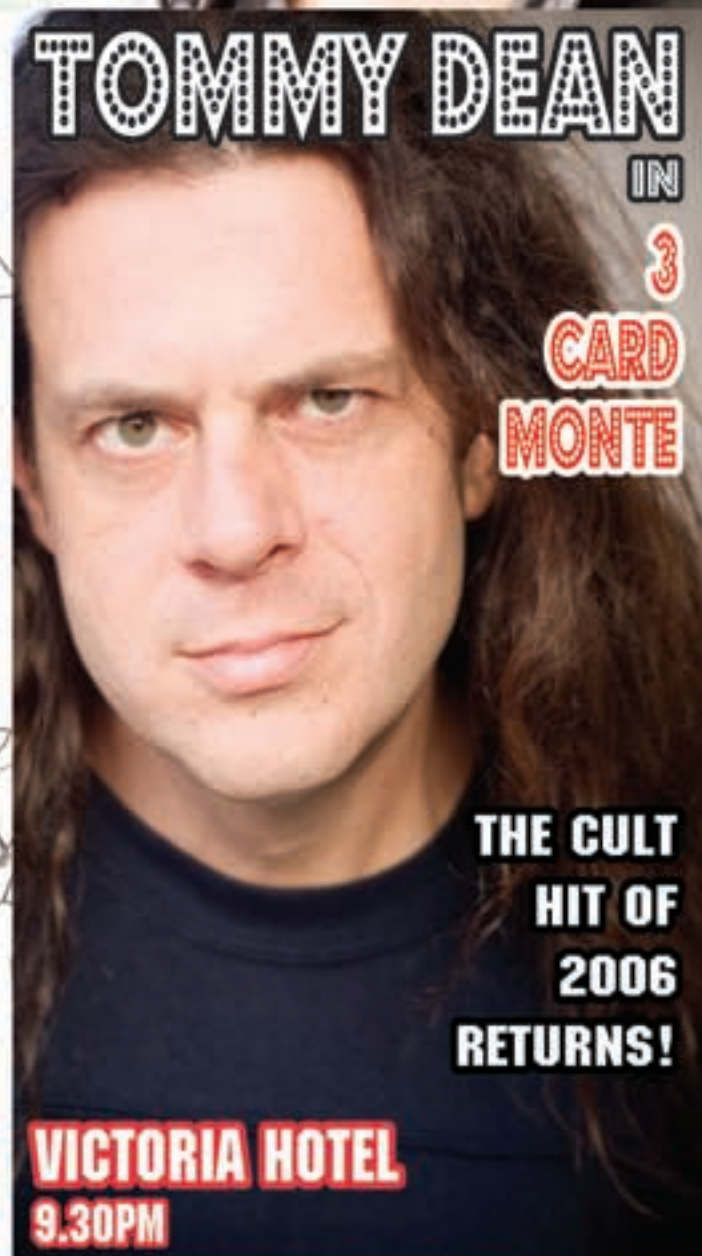
Fiona McGary

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